STOURBRIDGE
CHRONICLE

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A great British bake off every day at Warburtons

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Star secrets

Author researches life of an American screen icon

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Snow business

Winter family favourite returning to the stage

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THEATRE FIGHT WILL CONTINUE

CAMPAIGNERS aiming to save Dudley Hippodrome from demolition are determined to continue their fight despite the death of their leader.

Former Halesowen College lecturer Geoff Fitzpatrick was the driving force behind a campaign to save the landmark building when demolition plans were announced in 2011.

The 72-year-old died on Friday after a short illness, and members of the Friends of Dudley Hippodrome group, which he founded, have praised his hard work and devotion to the theatre campaign.

Gordon Downing, 77, from Dibdale Road, Dudley, said: "We are very sad to lose him. He was a very quiet, personable man who got on with the job without making too much fuss about it, and he will be sorely missed by the group.

Vision

"We have lost our leader and he will be very hard to replace."

He added that the group would continue with the campaign to try to realise his vision of reopening the theatre to big shows once again.

"We don't see why the biggest town in England shouldn't have its own theatre," Mr Downing said.

Friend Paul Collins called Mr Fitzpatrick an 'utterly fearless' campaigner.

He said Mr Fitzpatrick's condition worsened after being admitted to hospital with a collapsed lung two months ago.

His condition meant he was unable to attend an assembly on the steps of the theatre last month to mark its 75th anniversary.

Historian Dr Collins added: "There still remains the possibility that we are going to get it saved and reopened. We are all incredibly sad that when this does happen he won't be there to see it."

Garry Sawers, aged 55, from Avon Close, Pensnett, said he had never even been to the Hippodrome until he met Mr Fitzpatrick, but is now a fully-fledged member of the campaign to save it.

Geoff Fitzpatrick – sad loss

He said: "He was a very nice man, genuine and inoffensive, very sweet.

"In all the time I knew him I never had anything from him other than 'there's no way they are going to knock that Hippodrome down'. He never gave up on it, he always believed 100 per cent that we would win eventually."

Leader of Dudley Council, Councillor David Sparks, also paid tribute to Mr Fitzpatrick. He said: "It is a sad loss, I knew him as a local councillor when I represented Cradley. He was an honest campaigner."

Mr Fitzpatrick, of Halesowen, was instrumental in gathering a 35,000-signature petition that resulted in the theatre being given a stay of execution in July.

Go-ahead given to a revamp at market

COUNCILLORS on Monday heralded a multi-million revamp of Dudley town centre as they approved the final part of a overhaul of the old market place at a planning meeting.

The agreed proposal will see a new-look market place with 74 stalls stretching along High Street from Stone Street to Castle Street. The market will feature a central aisle between two rows of stalls covered by a roof.

Either side of the revamped market place will be the town's High Street fountain, fully restored, and a relocated Duncan Edwards statue.

Approved

At the meeting of the development control committeet, councillors approved the redevelopment of the market and two stages of work behind it, which will now begin in the Spring.

The first phase will see 42 new market stalls set up, while 29 current ones would stay and 25 stalls would be temporarily sited on the other side of the fountain.

During stage two, work to replace the remaining 29 stalls would commence.

The market place will feature six walkways, a disabled toilet and refuse area.

The overall work will also see the demolition of the current toilet block but not before a temporary toilet has been installed.

The whole project, which will cost £6.7million, is expected to be completed by early 2015.

At the meeting Councillor Asif Ahmed said: "I welcome this – it is a small piece of a jigsaw which over the next coming years will come together and become a masterpiece."

Councillor Qadar Zada, who chaired the meeting, said: "It is exciting to see Dudley town coming to life. When you see these plans on the horizon I think it will be one town which will be the envy of others across the borough, and many other boroughs."

Creative children feed the birds

Kasey Maybury, 10, and her six-year-old brother, Ellis, from Stourbridge, with the bird feeder they made at the library

LIBRARY staff refused to be beaten by vandals who showered a children's area with glass by breaking a window.

Four days after the vandal attack, Wordsley Library hosted a workshop for children.

The Friday afternoon session involved constructing a bird feeder out of pine cones.

Nine children, aged between three and 10, and their parents took part in the craft event, organised by Naomi France-Chadwick, a member of library staff.

Mother Amanda Wiggins, who went with her children, Cassie, aged eight, and Robbie, five, said: "The children had a great time getting messy and being creative."

Activities

It was one of a series of successful activities run at Dudley borough libraries over the festive season.

Dudley Councillor Stuart Turner, libraries boss, said there was a 'great range' of free events lined up for the year for children and families to enjoy.

A window was smashed at Wordsley Library and shards of glass fell into some of the children's books. The area was coned off while it was cleaned up.

Councillor Turner described it as an 'appalling act' of vandalism.

He said: "The library remained open, but we cordoned off a small area of the library while we cleaned it. We apologise to our library users for any inconvenience caused by this mindless damage."

Residents have their say over the cuts

MORE than 1,800 residents have had their say on which services they want to save from multi-million pound cuts in Dudley.

Councillors are urging more people to get involved ahead of the deadline at the end of this month.

The Labour-controlled authority has already revealed it needs to make cuts totalling £25.8 million by 2016/17. But around a further £32m needs to be found over the same period after central Government funding was cut further.

Litter

Among the savings already identified are cuts to street cleaning, which will see residents encouraged to hold their own litter picks, and plans to shorten the collection period for green waste to save £100,000.

Dudley Performing Arts has suffered a cut to its funding and around £2.3 million will need to be saved from children's services.

The Big Question consultation is open until January 31 with councillors keen to establish which services residents value the most.

The council had proposed up to 334 job losses by 2017. But unions say they fear many more could be at risk.

Take part at www.dudley.gov.uk or pick up a form from Dudley Council Plus or local library.

Fast food to create jobs

MORE than 100 jobs will be created under plans to build two new fast food restaurants as part of a multi-million pound development in Stourbridge.

McDonald's and KFC are looking to open drive-thru branches off Mill Race Lane on the outskirts of the town centre.

Three units would built under the proposals, which have been lodged with Dudley Council by Jumbuk Limited. A business for the third unit has not yet been found.

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CONTACT US

Have you got a story or an event you want covered? The Chronicle and the Express & Star have a team of reporters covering Halesowen who can help:

Tom Mason: 01902 319550
tom.mason@expressandstar.co.uk
Charlotte Lilley: 01902 319688
charlotte.lilley@expressandstar.co.uk
Will Ackermann: 01543 465305
will.ackermann@expressandstar.co.uk
Heather Large: 01384 353203
heather.large@expressandstar.co.uk
Louise Jew: 01384 353201
louise.jew@expressandstar.co.uk
Alex Ross: 01384 353207
alex.ross@expressandstar.co.uk
Andrew Turton: 01384 353202
andrew.turton@expressandstar.co.uk
Lee Watton: 01384 353230
lee.watton@expressandstar.co.uk

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Sports: E-mail: chronsport@expressandstar.co.uk
Photographic John Sambrooks
Tel: 01902 319431

Advertising:

Rebecca Vincze
Tel: 01384 399901 E-mail: r.vincze@expressandstar.co.uk

Emma Parkes
Tel: 01384 353234 E-mail: e.parkes@expressandstar.co.uk

Distribution: Paul Jones
Tel: 01902 319990 E-mail: p.jones@expressandstar.co.uk

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Talented artist had been ill for three months

EVELYN Purchase, 20, was found dead by her mother at their Butchers Lane home. She had been feeling unwell for more than three months having been diagnosed with sinusitis by a GP in January and given two courses of antibiotics.

Her concerned mother Tara took her to Dudley's Holly Hall walk-in centre at around 10pm on April 4. She was diagnosed with a respiratory tract infection and given antibiotics and antidepressant citalopram. On April 6, Mrs Purchase returned home to find her daughter lying on the bed unconscious with the house phone in her hand. She attempted mouth-to-mouth resuscitation but nothing could be done.

At the inquest on Monday, Black Country coroner Robin Balmain raised concerns over the care she had received at the walk-in centre, saying an assessment of Evelyn had been 'less than optimal'.

Dr Mahmud Ahmed prescribed strong antibiotics but Mr Balmain questioned why he had not looked into why she had not responded to two previous courses.

The inquest was told Dr Ahmed also gave Evelyn the anti-depressant citalopram as he believed she needed a 'lift' after being told she had lost her appetite. But her mother Mrs Purchase told the hearing that she was concerned her daughter did not have a mental health examination by Dr Ahmed before he prescribed the drug.

Mr Balmain gave a short narrative verdict where he concluded: "A medical examination that took place on the evening of April 4 was less than optimal. It's not possible to say the death could have been prevented."

Mr Balmain said of Dr Ahmed: "He made the assumption that what he was prescribing was going to be stronger [than previous antibiotics] and there was no basis for that assumption."

Dr Ahmed, giving evidence to the inquest, said he had not believed her chest infection was more serious, adding: "She was talking to me, she was not unduly short of breath, she was not distressed and she came walking into the room."

Student died two days after seeing walk-in GP

SHE was a talented art student who loved rock music and wanted to design computer games when she graduated from college.

But those dreams were shattered when Evelyn Purchase died of severe pneumonia on her mother's bed less than 36 hours after being sent home by an out-of-hours GP with antibiotics for a chest infection.

by Andrew Turton

The 20-year-old, from Butchers Lane, Cradley, died in the early hours of April 6 last year.

Black Country senior coroner Robin Balmain raised concerns over her care in the hours before her death, describing it as a 'tragedy'.

Her mother Tara, a 41 year old lecturer at Halesowen College, believes more should have been done to try to save her daughter's life.

Unwell

Evelyn started feeling unwell around the previous Christmas while staying at her aunt Janet's house where she was living while she studied at Hereford College of Arts.

Dudley Coroner's Court heard that Evelyn, who had previously attended Cradley High School and Halesowen College, had been diagnosed with sinusitis.

She was given antibiotics but Mrs Purchase told an inquest the medic requested she resisted taking the drug for a few days to see if she would get better without needing them. But, after going back to stay with her mother and sister Dana at the family home in Cradley, her condition did not improve.

She started to take the drug when she moved back to Hereford to restart college but it gave her side-effects which required a further prescription on March 28.

She had lost lose her appetite and had developed mouth ulcers and impetigo.

In desperation her mother called the health advice number NHS 111 on April 4 before deciding to take her up to see the out-of-hours GP at Dudley's Holly Hall Clinic. They were able to go in to see Dr Mahmud Ahmed at 9.58pm, Dudley Coroner's Court was told on Monday. He consulted notes sent to him following the conversation with the operator on the advice line which highlighted concerns about whether she was 'starving herself'.

Mr Balmain questioned why Dr Ahmed had not recorded her pulse rate or respiratory levels on the medical records but he said both were within normal levels.

Dr Ahmed said: "I did not check her oxygen levels as she was not unduly short of breath. I thought that the infection was not so serious for her to be admitted to hospital. I thought that she could be treated as an outpatient with a strong antibiotic."

Mrs Purchase had gone out on the night of April 5 to celebrate her birthday in London only after checking her eldest daughter was okay. Her ex-husband David had come to stay. But she arrived back home at around 4.50am on April 6 to find her daughter lying on the bed with the phone in her hand.

Giving evidence at the inquest, Mrs Purchase said: "I'm not saying that she wasn't treated but she was not treated appropriately for her condition and, as a consequence, she died on my bed, in my bedroom, in unbelievably bad circumstances.

"If she had been placed into hospital she would have had the opportunity to fight for her life.

Cause of death was given as extensive bilateral pneumonia with pulmonary abscesses as a contributing factor.

Mr Balmain, concluding the inquest, said: "This is a tragedy.

"This is the death of a young girl at the start of her adult life.

"It seems to me that what went on during the course of that examination was probably incomplete."

Promising Cradley art student Evelyn Purchase, right, who died at her family home after being sent home after seeing an out-of-hours GP, is pictured with her younger sister Dana

Sketch – a self-portrait by Evelyn, who has died aged just 20

Father in robbery of driver is jailed

A FATHER-of-two who robbed a taxi driver of mobile phones and a sat nav, leaving him fearing for his life, has begun a three-year jail term.

Shane Hickinbottom had spent the night drinking with friends and taking cocaine before getting in a Hackney carriage, Wolverhampton Crown Court heard.

Mr Nicholas Cartwright, prosecuting, said the 28-year-old directed the taxi driver Manohar Lal from Jews Lane, in Lower Gornal to a block of flats in Tipton.

He said Hickinbottom had asked to use the driver's mobile phone but was refused. The court heard that Hickinbottom then became aggressive and ended up snatching the phone and demanding to go to another address.

Mr Cartwright said he refused to hand the phone back when asked and hurled racial abuse at the driver, who then drove to a car park in Wordsworth Close.

He told the court that Hickinbottom then spotted another mobile phone in the taxi and helped himself. Mr Cartwright said he had punched and kicked the victim to get his car keys and he snatched a sat nav.

He said: "The defendant said he had a gun and he would shoot. The defendant got out of the car telling the driver not to contact the police as he had a brother who also had a gun," Mr Cartwright added.

Hickinbottom then ran off with the stolen items but was later tracked down by police and arrested following the incident on June 11.

Pub scheme green light

A FORMER pub will be converted into a three-bed flat, after plans were given the go-ahead by council officers.

The scheme is for the Beech Tree pub on Gorsty Hill Road, Rowley Regis.

Plans have been submitted by jab architectural design based in Sutton Coldfield.

The pub is on the junction with Halesowen Street, where the Sainsbury's supermarket is.

The scheme will include the partial demolition of the old women's toilets which are inside the venue.

CHRONICLE

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Source: Newspaper Society

Corks pop to celebrate as vineyard is still growing

A VINEYARD is reaping the rewards of the 2013 harvest with the expansion of its Halfpenny Green premises – despite a disappointing season for vineyards across the country just two years ago.

Bosses at Halfpenny Green Vineyards, near Bobbington, are expanding both the winery, where they will be offering guided tours and a private dining facility, as well as doubling the size of the farm shop.

The vineyard enjoyed a bumper crop in 2013 which has seen it produce 80,000 bottles of its own wine and 120,000 bottles for other growers.

Shop

The business was first established by Martin Vickers – an arable farmer who had the insight to plant half an acre of his land with vines. Today the third generation business is owned by son Clive Vickers and his wife Lisa.

The couple have continued to develop the business which as well as the vineyard, including wine tasting, a tea room and restaurant, large retail farm shop, a selection of arts and crafts outlets and three fishing lakes.The business now employs 45 staff.

Clive Vickers said: "I'm proud that as a boutique vineyard, our grapes are processed and bottled within fifty yards of where they are picked. This continues to ensure we provide a quality wine. Perceptions of English wine have changed over the years with more and more people purchasing it."

Finance for the expansion including the purchase of a new press and wine tanks has been provided by Barclays.

Library loan e-books too

MORE than 2,000 e-books are available for loan from a borough's libraries website as part a scheme to get people reading.

People registered with Dudley's libraries service can now browse the e-books site. They can also preview some of the books online and add books to a newly created wish list, before logging in.

Books can be downloaded to e-readers, computers or other suitable devices connected to the internet.

For more details on the free e-book service, go to www.dudley.gov.uk/libraries

Pies and pints may replace pounds at bank

Pie plan – The Old Bank on the corner of Coventry Street and High Street in Stourbridge

PIES and real ale could soon be served out of an historic former bank under plans to open a new restaurant.

The Old Bank on the corner of Coventry Street and High Street in Stourbridge has been empty for eight years. But now owner Adam Myers has submitted an application for a change of use for the landmark town centre building. He proposes turning it into an 'ale and pie house'.

The planning application, lodged with Dudley Council, by Charnjit Bhandal, of Adam Myers Ltd says: "The proposal is to bring back to life a redundant building.

"A local businessman is keen to rent the building and turn it into The Old Bank Ale and Pie House. Breakfast will be available as well as coffee and tea being served throughout the day and family Sunday lunches."

Neighbouring residents and businesses are being consulted on the plans for the business, which will be open seven days a week, and a decision will be made within the coming weeks.

The Old Bank was the first bank to open in Stourbridge in 1780. In 1852 the bank was taken over by the Birmingham and Midland Bank Company and was owned by the London & Midland Bank back in 1917.

It eventually became part of the Yorkshire Bank Group and closed in January 2006

The building overlooks the town's square and has carved stone facades and distinctive dormer windows.

It is not the first time that a new business has been mooted for the premises. Plans were submitted in 2007 to convert the old Yorkshire Bank into a trendy eatery, lounge bar and offices. At the time the plans caused controversy in the town, with residents and councillors concerned the venue would lead to an increase in noise, anti-social behaviour and litter.

Traders call for one-hour parking limit to be lifted

TRADERS buoyed by the opening of a new supermarket in Stourbridge are calling on council bosses to extend the parking time in the town centre to further boost shopping.

Shopkeepers say the one-hour parking restrictions in Lower High Street are hindering business.

They also say the one-hour limit is not needed because of the high number of spaces available in the town due to the opening of a 500-space car park at the new Crown Centre.

Report by Alex Ross

Geoff Round, part-owner of Paper Palace, said: "Shoppers should be able to park up, look around two to three shops, maybe something to eat, and not be hurried back to their cars.

Neglected

"I don't think the street would be clogged up with cars if you got in a three-hour time limit."

Clive Sowerby, owner of Sowerby's shoe shop, said: "For too long we have been neglected by the council and suffered from bad planning decisions like the town's ring road and Merry Hill. "But now, for the first time in a long while, we are seeing progress in the town, shoppers coming in and spending more time here.

"What better time to get together and discuss the parking, so we can sort out the parking restrictions, such as those in Lower High Street – an hour is simply not long enough."

Jon Tipper, shop manager of Gasway, said: "Now the new car park has opened, the road is a lot quieter, so I don't see why people should be asked to move their car after an hour."

But Colin Barnett, shop assistant at Hingley's All Sports and Hobbies, believes the parking restriction should remain. He said: "I think the parking situation is 100 per cent right. The street is quieter but you still need a restriction in place to stop people parking all day."

Councillor Khurshid Ahmed, cabinet member for transportation, said he was 'reluctant' to change the parking laws. He said: "We are always looking to support shops and businesses in our town centres and we do listen to the views of traders and shoppers alike. However, people must realise that the on-street free car parking that we offer for one hour encourages a turn over of car parking spaces, allowing more customers into the town."

Ammo finds closes tip

A TIP was evacuated and closed after a suspected live ammunition round was discovered by workers. Roads near Stourbridge tip in Birmingham Road were closed by police.

The evacuation took place at around 11am on Saturday and routes were able to re-open again by around 1pm. The item, thought to be a large bullet, is believed to have been found in rubbish being taken to the tip. The bomb disposal team were called, although a controlled explosion did not need to take place. The tip reopened later.

Luke Jones, age 12 ,celebrates becoming the youngest golfer to get a hole in one at Enville Golf Club with club president Martin Adams and his father Ian Jones

Luke is one to watch

TWELVE-YEAR-OLD Luke Jones has achieved something his golfer father has never been able to do – hitting a hole in one.

Luke Jones has only been playing golf seriously for around three years but has already succeeded with one of the game's toughest challenges.

The Summerhill School student, from Balmoral Road, Wordsley, was playing at his favourite Enville course with a friend just before Christmas as he approached hole five – a 156-yard-long par three. He then stunned everyone watching by hitting the shot.

Luke said: "I dropped on my knees and I was just like 'yeah, I got a hole in one'.

"I didn't think I would get one this early, maybe later on in my life. I felt really good, I couldn't believe it because it was my first, I just started jumping around."

His friend and eight others who witnessed the amazing sight were quick to congratulate him.

Luke currently has a handicap of 19, but is being tipped for better things by his father Ian. "It's an amazing feat at any age, but especially at such a young age," said Mr Jones, 48, a maintenance engineer at Merry Hill.

NEWS in brief

Objections to new crossing at college

A PROPOSAL for a pedestrian crossing for students at a newly-built college campus has been met with opposition from nearby residents.

Dudley College want to introduce the traffic-light controlled crossing in The Broadway in Dudley, opposite the Evolve campus. But the crossing will create noise disturbance and traffic queues, according to residents who have written to Dudley Council to object.

The council is expected to make a decision in the coming weeks.

Knife threat by a phone robber

A MAN terrorised two teenage brothers, telling them he was armed with a knife before stealing their mobile phones.

The brothers, aged 15 and 17, were walking along Mill Street, Brierley Hill, when they were approached by the man.

Detective Constable Nick Slym said: "Although neither of the brothers were hurt, this was a frightening robber."

The robber was aged between 20 and 25, had a pockmarked face and a thin moustache.

Sharp intake of breath for ladies

MEMBERS of a village women's group may make a sudden intake of breath as they hear a talk about corsets.

Corsetry will be the subject of the first meeting of the year for Hagley Afternoon Women's Institute on Monday, January 13.

Members will also be encouraged to enter a limerick competition about underwear with the first line starting 'A pretty young lady from...'

Blackbirds are on WI's agenda

BLACKBIRDS will be the subject for Clent Women's Institute's first meeting of the year.

Robert Barber will talk about 'A Blackbird's Tale' at the event, at the Parish Hall in Clent, near Stourbridge, tonight, Thursday, at 7.30pm.

Members will also be able to enter photographs of birds for a competition.

Join pathfinders

A GUIDED walk through picturesque countryside will take place on January 16. People should meet at The Dog Inn, Dunley, near Stourport at 10.30am. It is organised by the Rock Pathfinders group.

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NEWS

THE BEST OF PETER RHODES

USEFUL statistics. During the whole of 2013 in a UK populated by 60 million people, only three people per day, on average, managed to lock themselves in lavatories. Curiously reassuring, isn't it?

❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑

TIP for 2014. Don't get too excited over reports that Britain will have the biggest economy in Europe within 15 years, as some pundits are predicting. It is perfectly possible to live in a truly massive economy and still be very, very poor. Ask anyone in China.

❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑

THIS year marks the beginning of the commemoration of the First World War. Prepare for a creeping barrage of commemoration, comment and endless re-examination. But I guarantee nothing you see in 2014 will capture the black humour of the Tommies of 1914-18 better than John Jackson's tale of being buried alive by German shells. It's in his memoir, Private 12768, which was written in 1926 and published 80 years later. Jackson describes how the shells came ever closer until two dugouts full of British soldiers were obliterated by direct hits. Miraculously, all the Tommies survived and dug themselves out. As he puts it: "What lucky lads we were. Fourteen buried and all alive and kicking at the end of the funeral."

❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑

JACKSON'S words reminded me of my grandfather's war diary for 1919. He was with the Army of Occupation in Germany and had been gassed a few months earlier. A sudden dose of pneumonia almost killed him. Or as he recorded dryly: "That was when I nearly became a German landowner."

❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑

WHILE it's good to see First World War commemorative coins being produced by the Royal Mint, what on earth have they done to Lord Kitchener? The feature everyone noticed, apart from Kitchener's moustache, was his fierce squint. On the coin his eyes stare straight ahead, ocularly corrected for posterity. Kitchener without a squint is like Cromwell without the warts.

❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑

AND a special New Year wassail to Ruth Goodman, presenter of Tudor Monastery Farm (BBC2) a series which recreates rural life as it was in the 1500s, warts, warlocks and all. One moment they're all merrily carolling and the next (I bet this scene brought complaints) they're carving and twisting the head off a slaughtered pig. This is history in the raw, so authentic you can almost smell it. Goodman must be the only female presenter on television to face the cameras without even a dash of make-up. What a pro.

❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑

ONE New Year's resolution I shall try to follow: Think more positively about food banks. My initial reaction in 2013 was that there was a political agenda at work. How better to embarrass the Government than to set up hundreds of food banks and arrange photo-opportunities of hungry Brits queuing for their daily bread? It still strikes me as a rather American solution, designed to slap a sticking plaster over the problem than to tackle some of the social evils causing poverty – 24-hour boozing, online gambling and payday loans, for a start. But if kind people are prepared to donate food for the poor, and if charities are prepared to hand it out and if other people are willing to accept it, maybe we should applaud it, as we applaud other charities. Who knows, maybe this is David Cameron's "Big Society" in action.

❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑

A FRIEND received a onesie for Christmas, followed by another onesie at the New Year. So does she have two onesies - or a twosie?

❑❑❑❑❑❑❑❑

"I BELIEVE we should move to ban it," declares the Children's Commissioner for England Maggie Atkinson who says children need legal protection against being slapped by their parents. Dr Atkinson has no children of her own. And until you have actually had to deal with your own toddler attacking other kids, or your over-excited preschooler dashing into the traffic, then you really are in no position to lecture the rest of us.

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

Off-duty fireman fought to save driver

OFF-DUTY firefighter Lee Evans has told how he battled in vain to save the life of a motorist whose car crashed into a garden wall.

Mr Evans, crew commander at Dudley fire station, gave mouth to mouth and heart massage to the 78-year-old man, who is thought to have fallen ill at the wheel of his vehicle.

The car crashed into a small garden wall in Glynne Avenue, Kingswinford, about 100 yards from Mr Evans's home.

Mr Evans, aged 50, a former soldier who has been a firefighter for 15 years, said: "I didn't see the crash but came across the car, which had knocked over a small wall, as I came back from the shop.

"Four or five people were gathered around and I went to see if I could help.

"The man who had been driving had stopped breathing – so I dragged him out of the car and carried out cardiopulmonary resuscitation while someone else called an ambulance. I carried on trying to resuscitate him for about 10 minutes. I'm sad to hear that he has died."

Father-of-three Mr Evans has been trained in first aid as part of his firefighting role. He said: "I've used CPR a couple of times before at road accidents, as well as at fires. But it's the first time I've used my first aid training while off duty."

The motorist was taken to Russells Hall Hospital but died. A female passenger was taken to the hospital as a precaution.

Lee Evans tried to save motorist

Action demanded over mountain of rubbish

RESIDENTS that a towering pile of waste overlooking homes in Brierley Hill will remain in place for months despite a court ruling sending the company's boss to jail.

The Environment Agency said there are no plans to use taxpayers' money to pay for the clean up at Refuse Derived Fuel Ltd, in Brierley Hill.

by Andrew Turton

The agency's Midlands environment manager David Hudson believes the clean-up will cost between £500,000 and £750,000.

Residents are demanding a swift resolution to the situation which has blighted their homes for four years.

Contempt

Company director Robert McNaughton was jailed for six months when a suspended prison sentence order was activated by the High Court sitting in Birmingham on December 23.

He was found in contempt of court for failing to meet orders to clear the waste on the site, in Moor Street.

RDF Ltd, and Mr McNaughton as the firm's director, are still required to clear the site by February 17.

The Environment Agency has been given permission to pursue an order to seize McNaughton's assets in an attempt to fund the clean-up operation at the company site.But while the agency said they were having talks with the landowners to initiate the process, they admitted that clearing the site 'is going to take some time'.

In a statement, the Environment Agency, said: "We believe that those that are responsible for the site and the waste should pay for the clearance. Accordingly our intention is to press the landowners and Mr McNaughton to do that.

"Sequestration is part of our response as it may allow us to force Mr McNaughton to do the work.

"If the public purse were to be used to pay for clearance of waste we believe that this would encourage others to abandon waste sites in similar fashion."

Ward councillor Rachel Harris, who has helped led the campaign calling for the site to be cleared, said: "I'm calling on the Environment Agency to work with the landowners and the council and anyone who is left in RDF to finally move this forward and clear the site.

"Local people have waited and waited for this to happen, it has to happen now," she added.

Zoo sponsor footballers

YOUNG footballers have netted a brand new strip, thanks to sponsorship from a zoo. Broom, the white-ruffed lemur, was also keen to show off his fancy footwork as he joined in the presentation of the strip to players from the under-nine Phoenix football team at Dudley Zoo.

The zoo's distinctive tiger logo features boldly on the front of the red and yellow kit. Team manager Ian Stretton said: "We are absolutely delighted with the sponsorship, which has not only allowed us to buy a whole new strip for this season, but also new footballs to train with as well."

The team, which is part of the Stourbridge and District Youth Football League, trains weekly at Milking Bank, Dudley.

Money expert hospice donation

Anita Gatehouse donates the proceeds from her book to hospice chief executive Stevan Jackson, hospice shop volunteer Marlene Watson, social worker Margaret Thorogood, and fundraisers Vanessa Wale, Vicki Rowles and Charlotte Schofield

A FINANCIAL expert who wrote a guide to help widows organise their finances has donated all the profits from its first two months on sale to a hospice.

Anita Gatehouse, author of A Widow's Guide, called into Mary Stevens Hospice to hand over £1,218 which will help towards the running costs of the centre in Hagley Road, Stourbridge. Mrs Gatehouse, who runs Cre8 Financial & Business Planners in Kidderminster, launched the book in September.

She said she had advised many widows during her 25 years running the business, and they often found it hard to cut through the vast array of information available.

Onesies direction to help a charity

IT SEEMS volunteers at a charity which supports vulnerable people through criminal and court proceedings will go to any length to help others.

Twelve of those who work for the Victim Support Service in the Midlands donned different multi-coloured 'onesies' to trek six miles between Sandwell Magistrates and Dudley Magistrates Court in the cold weather.

Around 350 volunteers for the charity work in the Midlands, as one of the first points of contact for victims of crime, and to also aid witnesses in criminal court cases.

They receive specialist training which helps them to support victims, including those who have suffered domestic violence, all of which is paid for through donations.

Last month a group of volunteers from Sandwell, Dudley and Birmingham crown and magistrates courts managed to raise a huge £1,700 for the cause.

Sarah Lang, senior service deliveries manager at the charity, said: "They got an amazing response on their walk, a lot of cars were beeping their horns."

Park and ride at tram stop

TRAM users will get a new park and ride service at a station to ease the car-clogged streets of an estate.

The move will see a parking area built close to Bradley Lane Metro Stop in Moxley. Now, the West Midlands Passenger Transport Authority, Centro and Walsall Council are looking to carry out a feasibility study to prepare for the project on the track that runs between Wolverhampton and Birmingham Snow Hill.

Centro spokesman Peter Cameron said: "The stop is very popular with passengers."

Pub to reopen

A CENTURY-OLD Stourbridge pub that has been closed for more than two years is to reopen at the beginning of February as a real ale venue.

The Seven Stars in Brook Road, Oldswinford, which is owned by Heineken, is being refurbished ready to return to business.

If you keep one New Year's resolution, make it this one.

NHS Blood and Transplant

Save a life, give blood

For more information, or to make an appointment visit blood.co.uk or call 0300 123 23 23

Save a life Give blood

More police in unit for protection of children

A POLICE unit dealing with sexual offences and child exploitation is to increase officers from 480 to 800 due to a rise in reported crimes.

The Public Protection Unit at West Midlands Police will undergo the changes from May, to finish by December. There will be a dedicated domestic abuse team based at each Local Policing Unit, as well extended child abuse teams.

Vulnerable

The force's vulnerable adults team will also be expanded and it will be strengthening its child exploitation teams, both force-wide and locally.

Chief Superintendent Simon Hyde, head of Public Protection at West Midlands Police, said the move is as a result of a hike in reports of serious abuse and exploitation.

"We have seen an increased number of reports of these issues over the last six months while running our anti-exploitation initiative Operation Sentinel," said Ch Supt Hyde. "As a result we are now looking to increase the size of our Public Protection Unit and strengthening the department."

Grants are helping the job hunters

MORE than £850,000 was spent kitting out job hunters with new clothes and paying for their travel to interviews, figures reveal.

People were handed money from Government to pay for equipment to start work – such as £300 grants to pay for suitable clothes – in the last financial year.

The clothing payments were among more than £540,000 spent on 'equipment to start work'. That could also include tools and a contribution to car tax, or an MOT certificate for someone who needs their own car to start their new job. Travel costs to make job interviews cost more than £157,000.

In total when other payments which made to help people prepare to go into work are taken into account, the bill for the Black Country, Staffordshire and Shropshire was £850,553.

It means more than £16,000 of public money is being spent in that area every week to help unemployed people find work.

It costs £428 per smoker to get them to quit

MORE than £6 million has been spent in one year helping thousands of smokers across the West Midlands to kick the habit.

Of those who turned to the NHS for advice on quitting between April 2012 and March 2013, a total 15,995 across the Black Country, Staffordshire and Worcestershire successfully quit. Up to £428 was spent on each smoker during the period.

Stop smoking services offered included one-to-one support sessions, advice on nicotine replacement therapy such as gum and patches and a scheme for pregnant women and their families. Councils have now taken on responsibility for public health.

In Dudley, where there were 2,746 successful quitters, the total spent was £1,176,000. Dudley Council has pledged to work with local communities to reduce the number of people smoking. Council leader David Sparks said: "The effects of smoking in the borough are shocking.

"While local people continue to smoke we are losing lives, ruining children's health, losing money from the local economy and ruining the environment. We are taking firm action to stamp out the smoking habit."

Successfully

In Sandwell the bill was £1,077,000 and 2,536 people gave up while Walsall spent £1,130,000 and 2,686 residents successfully quit.

In Wolverhampton 1,392 people finished and the cost was £389,000. Figures show the bill for South Staffordshire was £1,225,000 for 4,149 quitters. Worcestershire PCT paid £606,000 as 2,486 gave up.

Amounts spent per quitter ranged from £244 in Worcestershire to £428 in Dudley. The average West Midlands cost per person was £348 and the total cost was £6,173,000.

During the financial year 2012/13 there were 724,247 people nationally who successfully gave up cigarettes.

Other services offers to help people give up the habit include encouraging smokers to have their lung age tested, their carbon monoxide levels monitored as well as offering free advice on how to plan ahead and quit smoking for good.

Figures show more than 23,000 smokers in the West Midlands have quit as part of the annual national Stoptober campaign. A total of 23,579 smokers joined a quarter of a million others across the country to kick the habit as part of the 28-day stop smoking challenge. It was the second highest participation rate in the country, second only to London. It runs throughout October and challenges people to quit for 28 days.

Folks had better watch out when unlucky Ian is about

WATCH out for Ian White. Because when he's around, bad things seem to happen.

During his 50th birthday year, he has come across a catalogue of calamities and even tragedies.

When an elderly British holidaymaker plunged 12ft from the quayside into the sea next to a cruise ship, Ian was there. As another tourist died after allegedly being hit over the head with a rock during a fight in a Lanzarote hotel, Ian, from Wordsley, was staying in an apartment block next to where the incident happened. And, when an elderly couple suffered injuries in an accident on an escalator in a Wolverhampton store, he was there too.

Ian White: 50th birthday

Serious

These are just three of a whole string of dramatic and distressing incidents that the local government electoral worker has stumbled across during his 50th birthday celebrations.

"I don't seem to be able to go anywhere without something pretty serious happening – I feel like I've been a bit of a Jonah this year," said Ian.

Ian as kept a diary of the traumatic toll of incidents he has witnessed – or come across – during the year.

January 24: Ian flew to Lanzarote to celebrate his 50th birthday, which was on February 2. The following night, in the apartment block next to where he was staying, a Scottish holidaymaker died from a heart attack after allegedly being attacked, leading to the arrest of a couple from Liverpool.

March 8: An elderly couple suffered leg injuries after falling down the escalator in Beatties in Wolverhampton. Ian saw the man and woman just after the incident.

March 26: He came across a medical emergency at a check-in desk at Birmingham Airport.

May 19: Ian was in Mary Stevens Park, Stourbridge, when a young boy suffered injuries falling out of a tree.

July 22: Ian was about to board a cruise liner in Marmaris, Turkey, when an 83-year-old man fell from the quayside 12ft into the sea. Ian has described the sheer 'horror' of seeing the man floating in the sea before he was rescued.

September 28: Ian arrived on the scene where a carjacking had just taken place at the junction of Hungary Hill and Junction Road, Stourbridge.

November 7: He was driving past King Edward VI sixth form college in Stourbridge when he saw a car had overturned.

November 9: Someone was injured in a road accident outside a Liverpool hotel where he was staying.

"It's weird that I've personally come across so many bad things during this year, although I've still managed to enjoy my 50th," said Ian.

Hats off to life-saving staff

Staff, from left, Lynn Thompson, Elizabeth Gofford, Dr Berni Garrihy, Denise Walton, Steph Rogers and, middle, Dr Rajan Paw

THEY can be fluffy or come with bobbles or even ears. But whatever you wear on your head, nurses say a simple woolly hat can be a lifesaver.

Staff at Dudley's Russells Hall Hospital have kickstarted their Keep Warm, Keep Well campaign by donning headgear of all shapes and sizes.

An appeal is under way for hats and scarves, and this year's push is inspired by an incident which proved the importance of staying warm.

A 99-year-old man arrived at the hospital with severe hypothermia but was nursed back to health with the help of a woolly hat. The man was 'freezing cold to touch' when he arrived at A&E after suffering a fall at home. A&E consultant Dr Joanne Taylor scoured the department in search of a woolly hat to warm him up.

"The woolly hat I found may not have solely saved his life but it certainly helped to reduce any further heat loss," she said. "He is now recovering well."

Dr Taylor and Matron Briony Howells are appealing for donations of hats and scarves to distribute to elderly and vulnerable patients.

People can drop off woolly hats and scarves at Russells Hall Hospital's Accident and Emergency Department.

Dr Raj Paw, A&E consultant and Head of Service, said, "Every winter we see a significant number of patients with injuries and illnesses caused by falling temperatures. Older people are especially vulnerable."

NEWS in brief

Housing planned at former pub site

A DISUSED pub will be turned into a home and its beer garden and car park will have houses built on it ss part of proposals approved by planners.

Developer Prestbury Limited, in Stourport, has received the go-ahead from Dudley Council for five homes at the former Albion Public House, in Albion Street, Wall Heath.

The council's development control committee approved its plan for four three-bedroom houses on the car park and beer garden.

The council also gave the green light to the firm's plan to turn the pub into a four-bedroom house.

Window smashed at library by a yob

A VANDAL was responsible for showering glass into the children's area of a library, putting part of the building out of action.

Staff at Wordsley Library discovered on December 30 that a small window had been broken. Shards of glass had fallen into some of the children's books and the area was cordoned off while cleaned up.

Dudley councillor Stuart Turner, cabinet member responsible for libraries, said: "This is an appalling act of vandalism which has affected a small part of the library."

Dean sticks neck out with proposal

WHEN Dean Wood dreamt of his perfect proposal, he knew he would be sticking his neck out to ensure his childhood sweetheart said yes.

As his other half Katherine Spooner was mad on giraffes he decided to get down on one knee at Dudley Zoo.

And luckily she agreed to marry him.

Mr Wood, from Barns Lane, in Rushall, Walsall, spent weeks planning the proposal and struck upon the idea of taking his girlfriend on a day out on Saturday to the attraction to feed her favourite animals.

Auctioneer story is topic for a talk

A TALK on the life of an auctioneer will take place when Wordsley History Society holding an event tonight, Thursday, at 7.30pm.

It will be held at the community centre in Wordsley Green.

New members and visitors are welcome.

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NEWS FEATURE

IN MY VIEW WITH MARK ANDREWS

HOT on the heels of shadow transport minister Mary Creagh's outburst at the apparent sexism of Thomas the Tank Engine, it now appears that another inhabitant of the Westminster bubble has been spending a little too much time in the children's library again.

This time it's independent consultant Caroline Shenton, who has been commissioned to come up with how to turn the Houses of Parliament into a 'visitor attraction'. Her proposal is for a Willy Wonka-style great glass elevator on the side of the Victoria Tower.

I know politicians love banging on about 'transparency', but this is ridiculous.

❒❒❒❒❒

WHEN they said we're all in this together, it never for one moment occurred to me that would extend to ladies and gentleman of the Bar.

No, not that kind of bar. A group of our learned friends were out on strike this week, manning the picket lines in their full clobber, gowns, winged-collars, and wigs, the whole shebang.

Cuts to the legal aid budget has apparently left some of them struggling to get by, says Mr Nigel Lithman QC, who appears to be a sort of shop steward for m'learned friends. He warns that unless barristers are paid more, many of us will soon find ourselves living next door to paedophiles and rapists because there will be nobody to prosecute them. Not that he would want to cause any undue alarm, you understand.

Needless to say, there have been bitter arguments about how much barristers actually earn. Justice Secretary Chris Grayling says they typically earn £84,000 a year. Mr Lithman - doesn't he sound like he should be a judge on X Factor? - says it is closer to £37,000.

I'm sure they would agree, though, that there's only one way to settle this. Full public inquiry, led by a top judge, senior silks on either side, and wigs all round.

What do we want? An independent inquiry. When do we want it? In the fullness of time.

❒❒❒❒❒

IT would take a heart of stone not to see the funny side of the ship full of global-warming fans who set sail to Antarctica to investigate the disappearing ice cap - and ended up getting stuck in it.

At the time of writing, their ship has been stuck in the 'vanishing' ice for 10 days, as is the Chinese ice-breaker ship sent out to rescue them. Eventually they were freed by a third ship, an Australian icebreaker.

Quite how many hydrocarbons have been emitted during this ill-fated school field trip, but I suspect it will take quite a few low-energy light bulbs and cycle trips by the time we're finished.

Setting standards – Brett with community champion Nick Sutcliffe at the bakery

Lorries at the Wednesbury bakery which produces two million loaves a week

Using their loaf to keep it in the family

IT IS ONE of the largest bakeries in the UK, employing 4,500 staff – including 430 from its base in Wednesbury

And no matter what type of bread you eat at home, you are bound to have heard of the Warburtons brand.

The family-run business is as synonymous with the shopping list as Cadbury chocolate and Tetley tea, and ever since its beginnings in 1876 it is still going strong.

Thomas Warburton and his wife Ellen first opened their grocery shop in 1870, and during a slump in the grocery market in 1876, Ellen started baking bread.

Her first batch of four loaves of bread and six cakes sold out in under an hour and within two weeks the tiny shop in Bolton was renamed 'Warburtons the Bakers' and continued to go from strength to strength.

More than 130 years later the company is still in the hands of the family, run by fifth generation family members Jonathan, Ross and Brett Warburton.

Integral

And family values very much remain an integral part of the business, Brett Warburton said during a visit to the Wednesbury bakery. "I'm fifth generation and it is still very much a family business. Not only in terms of its ownership, but also in terms of its ethos. We pride ourselves on being a family business. There are still three family members on the board – myself, Jonathan and Ross."

The Wednesbury base, in Moorcroft Drive, produces two million loaves a week and serves around 2,000 shops, 24 hours a day, 363 days a year.

It closes only for Christmas Day and Easter. Brett said the brand is often quoted as being one of the top three in the country behind Coca Cola and Walkers, and it aims to treat staff as part of one big family. As such, it runs a scheme called community giving, investing in schemes as well as donating products to the local community.

Brett Warburton proudly views the fruits of his company's labour as he visited the Wednesbury site, which employs 430

"We like to think we treat our people well and want our business to operate as a large family. We first set foot outside Lancashire in 1984 and we have grown that on quality of production and quality of service. We are very lucky to have a lot of people who have worked for the business for a very long time," Brett added.

Nick Sutcliffe is the community champion at Wednesbury and explained the company invests in a number of ways. Under financial giving, the company donates small amounts of money to purchase specific pieces of equipment.

Last year more than £20,000 was donated in the West Midlands supporting a range of activities, as well as hundreds of thousands of pounds more to the charitable sector. In addition, around £27,000 of products were given to one-off events such as church events, breakfast clubs, and Ronald McDonald House in Birmingham for families of patients in hospitals and hospices.

Meanwhile, the company also has an investment programme where it gets employees into the community. In one case it has teamed up with the RSA Academy in Tipton and has this year been working with business students on the international baccalaureate. Brett added: "Where we used to just give someone a cheque and move on we like to get involved with the people that we work with."

People can apply for support from the firm's financial giving scheme, which is aimed at supporting projects, activities and organisations that have charitable aims and will be of real direct benefit to local communities. Visit **www.warburtons.co.uk** to find out more.

THROUGH THE YEARS

1983...

A JOB centre was besieged by hundreds of people applying for work at the Austin Rover car plant in Longbridge. Job-hunters defied the snow and rain and started queuing outside the employment exchange in Northfield before it had opened. Around 600 people applied for fewer than 400 posts. But it was all in vain as the positions were already filled.

A POLICE sergeant was wounded by a Zulu spear when a man thrust it through a bedroom door during a house siege in Birmingham. A 34-year-old man, who was eventually persuaded to come out after seven hours, was detained under the Mental Health Act.

1993...

CORONATION Street actress Anne Kirkbride was set for a return to the cobbles after recovering from throat cancer. The actress, who played Deirdre Barlow had a lump removed from her neck.

EDUCATION Secretary John Patten revealed that he had been 'flogged' from time to time at his strict Jesuit school. But despite this experience, he said he regretted that the cane had been banned by European court rulings as he launched a new crackdown on bullying and racial harassment in schools.

THE world of cricket was mourning the death of commentator Brian 'Johnners' Johnston, at the age of 81. His double act with Henry 'Blowers' Blofeld on Test Match Special, which frequently made much use of schoolboy humour, would often leave listeners, not to mention himself, in fits of giggles.

2003...

SEVERAL shops were forced to close as Brierley Hill town centre was overcome with a swarm of rats. In scenes reminiscent of the Pied Piper, one woman walking along Pearson Street turned round to discover she was being followed by around half a dozen rodents.

BRITNEY Spears' whirlwind marriage was set to end as suddenly as it began, with reports that she was trying to get her vows annulled within hours of making them at Las Vegas' Little White Chapel. Sources said the 5.30am ceremony, where she was walked down the aisle by a barman, was a joke which had gone too far.

A MOTHER and son were rescued from a house in Wolverhampton after an electric blanket being used to heat home brew caught fire. Assistant divisional fire officer David Glenis warned that electric blankets should never be used in this way.

LETTERS

Lack of hospital buses is proving a real sickener

MY husband and I have just returned from an appointment at New Cross Hospital, Wolverhampton.

We chose to use public transport as parking is usually quite difficult and the cost high. We were shocked to discover that even though this is a huge hospital split into several zones there are very few buses serving it.

To travel to and from Wolverhampton bus station there is just one bus every hour, or if you are prepared (or able) to walk quite some distance to the other side of the hospital there is one that comes every half an hour on the return journey. There appears to be no services on Sundays. We had to wait 45 minutes as the bus was late anyway.

There are a number of buses that pass the entrance but if you are incapacitated it is a long walk from there to your hospital department. It is now clear why parking is an issue as there seems to be no other way for some people to get there.

J JAMES, Wordsley

Bring Bratch to former glory

I WOULD like to draw your attention to the old Bratch Pumping Station in Bratch Lane, Wombourne. To me it seems such a crime to let the beautiful old steam engines be left to rust away, after the care and attention they had from Friends of the Bratch, which was disbanded after Severn Trent shut the station down.

J TURNER,
Orton Lane,
Wombourne

Message to woman who stole girl's scarf

I HOPE the middle-aged well-dressed woman, who claimed the Burberry scarf left in River Island at Merry Hill on Friday, December 27, at approx 5pm, was her scarf is enjoying the gift she stole.

She must have been watching as my grand-daughter misplaced the scarf whilst trying on a coat, saw us leave the store and saw the assistant take the scarf behind the counter.

Within ten minutes we returned to the store to be told the scarf has been claimed by this woman just five minutes earlier. How despicable. This was my 14-year-old daughter's Christmas present and she is devastated. I hope this woman can live with her conscience.

CCTV footage has been observed and the police informed. Hopefully what goes around comes around.

HALESOWEN READER,
name and address supplied

LETTERS to the Editor

POST
Dudley Chronicle, Chronicle Editorial, 51-53 Queen Street, Wolverhampton WV1 1ES

E-MAIL
Dudley.chrons@expressandstar.co.uk

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number of the writer. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

Car wash start-ups raise a few questions

REF a letter sent in by L Handley regarding car wash concerns, Halesowen Chronicle November 28. He has raised a very good point

Like him, I have noticed that so many of these are starting up, the people operating then are usually foreigners.

Everything I sell I have to issue a receipt, these people do not. So my point is, do these people adhere to health and safety requirements, as i have to, and is any check carried out to ensure that they do comply?

Also, are the chemicals used for washing the vehicles adhering to environmental guidelines?

As it is all cash, do they supply detailed accounts to the income tax and national insurance people, are they monitored?

Are they, or the people working for them, on benefits and do they declare all the income they are receiving for working at such places?

It will be interesting to see what response this brings.

COLIN GRIFFIN,
Sealine Support Services Litd,
sent via email

Total more than £25k is raised for appeal

ON BEHALf of Quarry Bank branch of the Royal British Legion, I would like to thank the people of Quarry Bank and Brierley Hill for their very generous donations for the 2013 Poppy appeal.

Thank you to Asda Brierley Hill, Sainsbury's Merry Hill and the Merry Hill Centre for their support, also all the schools, shops, pubs, clubs and factories for having collection boxes on their premises. A very big thank you to our volunteer collectors who have helped us collect the magnificent total of £25,548.89 for this year's Poppy Appeal.

The Royal British Legion are proud to be the number one charity providing welfare, comradeship and representation to the whole of the Armed Forces community. With your support we will continue to support those in needives.

E HOMER
Branch Secretary,
Halesowen

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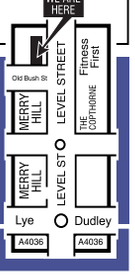

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NEWS FEATURE

Author's insight into what made Steve McQueen tick

Richard Sydenham spent 17 years researching McQueen

UNHAPPY with the way his latest movie was going, and troubled by his own infidelities, Steve McQueen asked his wife Neile Adams if she had ever betrayed him. She insisted she hadn't.

Report by Mark Andrews

Unconvinced, he made her take cocaine, and continued with his interrogation, until eventually she confessed to a one-night stand. Then, in a state of fury, he produced a pistol, and pointed it at her head until she revealed the name of the man with whom she had cheated.

Frightened

Behind those piercing blue eyes and effortless magnetism lay a troubled and insecure individual, whose frailties are laid bare in a dramatic new book by Black Country author Richard Sydenham.

Sydenham, a 39-year-old father-of-two from Cradley Heath, has spent 17 years researching his 619-page book Steve McQueen: The Cooler King.

The book, released to coincide with the 50th anniversary of the Great Escape film reveals how McQueen's rugged faced masked a paranoid and sometimes violent man, scarred by the maternal neglect he experienced as a child, and fearful that one day his career would come crashing down.

"The only thing Steve was ever secure about was his appeal to women," says Hollywood veteran Robert Vaughn, in his foreword for the book. "Steve was a frightened man about all sorts of things from money, stardom, life in general, but he was especially insecure about his stardom."

Vaughn, who appeared alongside McQu-een in three movies, remembers how his friend had an obsessive rivalry with leading man Yul Brynner during the filming of The Magnificent Seven. "He was constantly knocking on my door at six in the morning and he'd say, about Brynner, 'Did you see how big his gun was? Did you see how big his horse was? He was always worried Yul was going to steal the film from him."

McQueen's philandering was the stuff of legend. The book reveals on one occasion McQueen accosted a pretty girl in the street with the line 'I'm Steve McQueen, let's go and have a little bit,' and she immediately jumped onto the back of his motorcycle. Yet paradoxically, Sydenham says he was always a committed family man, who felt a great bond of loyalty to all three of his wives.

Sydenham believes it was his own guilt, which would often weigh down heavily on his shoulders, which led to the incident with the gun during the filming of his troubled 1971 motor-racing movie, Le Mans. "Steve could not understand that she knew of so many affairs that he had had over the course of their marriage, yet remained faithful to him," says Sydenham.

Shortly after, at their chateau in France, Neile discovered she was pregnant with their third child, and McQueen ordered her to have an abortion, saying he could not be sure the child was his. Neile's confession would ultimately spell the end of their marriage, and the couple were divorced after 16 years in 1972.

During the writing of the book, Sydenham managed to persuade Jacqueline Bisset to break her silence about rumours that she had an affair with McQueen when they appeared together in Bullitt. "No, we did not have an affair," says Bisset, now 69. "Yes he was handsome and there was a little bit of teasing, but nothing happened."

During the making of The Thomas Crown Affair, McQueen's obsession with detail drove the crew to distraction.

He tried on four different wristwatches, and hated them all, and eventually it was agreed that McQueen's own watch looked better on him than any of the expensive ones that had been purchased for the sharp-suited character.

The next day, McQueen dumbfounded the production team by issuing them with a 250 dollar bill for the rental of his watch.

In The Towering Inferno, he insisted that the brim on his fireman's helmet should be cut back so it would not cast a shadow on his eyes.

"He was told that if they changed his they'd have to change everyone's," says co-star Susan Blakely. He said: 'Then change 'em!'"

Frailties laid bare – Steve McQueen in The Magnificent Seven

Co-star Jacqueline Bisset

McQueen with Dustin Hoffman in the classic Papillon

As the fire chief in The Towering Inferno

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NEWS

Quirky Edwardian home has gone on the market

From left, Natalie and Nicolas Cartwrightwith sales negotiator Matthew Cooke, from Andrew Grant estate agents

IT is a house worthy of today's celebrity grand designers – a corner Edwardian home with three octagonal rooms and a swimming pool.

Spire House in Hagley once featured the hallmarks of a modern inventor – a washing machine which doubled as a potato boiler and a dual dishwasher system which meant no plates had to be put away.

It was the home of businessman Geoffrey Cartwright for more than 50 years. Following his death, it is on the market with a guide price of £350,000.

Mr Cartwright's son Nicolas said it was a 'quirky house' which perfectly suited his father.

"My father said he bought the house because he loved its architecture which is quite unusual," he said. "For me, it was a wonderful house to grow up in. It offered many hiding places and a swimming pool in the garden. It will be sad to see it finally leave the family."

Little is known about the first owners of the house or why it was built to its design in 1904.

Among the features are a spire with a weathercock, three octagonal shaped rooms and ornate ridge tiles.

The 'swimming pool, created in a figure-of-eight shape, was added by Mr Cartwright when, soon after moving in, he had a £10 bet with Dr Hansell at Hagley Surgery Practice on who could build a pool the quickest.

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CLUB NEWS

Cheque for £500 given out

MARY STEVENS HOSPICE LUNCHEON CLUB

THE Christmas lunch was held at The Granary Hotel and Restaurant, Shenstone in December.

Nearly 60 members enjoyed a traditional Christmas meal in a room appropriately decorated.

The speaker was Simon Ward, the food and beverages manager at the hotel. He has a passion for wine and has his own company "Glory of Wine Tastings" to promote knowledge and understanding of good wine.

He told the story of producing champagne and recommended suitable wines to accompany a Christmas meal. Members were invited to partake in the tasting of a port produced in the Douro Valley in Portugal.

The club meets four times a year at the Granary and Barbara Julian was able to present Geoff Wakeman, a member of the Hospice Board, with a cheque for £500, which brought the total donated by the luncheon club to £20,000 since the club was formed.

Geoff thanked the members for their generosity reminding them that the running costs of the hospice were more than £2m a year.

The next meeting will be on Thursday March 13 and anyone interested in joining can obtain more details from Barbara on 01384 295848.

Rise and decline of carpet industry

K'FORD LADIES SOCIAL CIRCLE

ON December 12, chairman Sheila Evans welcomed all to the last meeting of the year, the grand Christmas party.

Also in attendance was the company secretary to the charity which supports the Fistula Hospital in Addis Ababa, who had come to collect blankets knitted or crocheted by group members, Ladies of Saint Michael's Church, Himley, and the ladies of Kinver Church.

Following an update on progress made at the hospital, the ladies then enjoyed a sumptuous buffet prepared by the committee and to receive an extravagant raffle prize.

On November 7, Melvin Thompson, gave a detailed account on the rise and decline of the carpet industry in Kidderminster.

The next meeting will be at 7.45pm on February 6 at the Royal British Legion, Kingswinford.

The Christmas party goes with a swing

HALESOWEN PENSIONERS (WMPC)

THE last meeting was the Christmas party. Nevertheless, speaker, Mr Brendan Clifford, assistant director of Dudley Social Services (Adult Services) gave a very informative and interesting talk on what mental strategies should be adopted to help maintain good mental, as well as physical health.

He also explained the history of provisions of care by local authorities since 1948, and gave a brief outline of the proposed legislation of the 2015 Care Bill. He explained how attitudes have changed both by the care providers and people receiving care and now emphasis is placed on providing care on an individual bases, giving more choice. As is usual, there were long discussions, which served to inform everyone about present problems and how best to resolve them.

The party afterwards went with a swing.

The next meeting will be on January 17 from 10.15am to 12.30pm at the Shenstone Theatre in Halesowen Library. Entrance is free, there will be tea and biscuits and plenty of chat.

Officers re-elected at AGM

KINGSWINFORD AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

AT the AGM in December the following officers were re-elected: chairman – Brenda Arthur, membership secretary – Ena Jones, programme secretary – Betty Holding, treasurer – Ron Julian and committee member Joyce Burns.

The chairman appealed for additional committee members, failing which the future of the society would have to be considered. It was founded in 1991 and it was hoped that it would be able to continue.

The formal part of the evening was followed by a presentation by Bill Devitt on the 'Orient Express'.

The evening concluded with refreshments and wine to end the year's meetings.

The meeting on Monday February 3 sees a return of Dr Paul Collins presenting 'By Tram from Dudley'.

New members and visitors are welcome. Call Ron Julian 01384 295848.

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A second cruise, this time along the Chobe River, almost guarantees sightings of elephant and hippo, then a visit to Cape Point passes the fishing harbour of Hout Bay. Continuing on, see the breathtakingly scenic Chapman's Peak Drive, full of rugged seascapes and cliffs to the Cape of Good Hope Nature Reserve.

At Cape Point itself see the confluence of the Indian and Atlantic Ocean then it's on to Boulders Beach to see the resident penguin colony.

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Withymoor Primary headgirl Kayley Bennett, Savannah Hunt, centre, headboy Sam Lester, with family of Charles Scott and members of the Quarry Bank RBL

Savannah continues family's fundraising

A 'LITTLE ANGEL' has honoured the memory of her great-grandfather by helping ex-servicemen raise thousands of pounds.

Savannah Hunt joined members of Quarry Bank Royal British Legion, including her grandfather Colin, during collection days for this year's Poppy Appeal.

And the nine-year-old was also on hand to present staff and pupils at Withymoor Primary School, Brierley Hill, with this year's Charles Scott Shield at a ceremony.

Amount

The accolade, named in honour of her great-grandfather, is presented to the school which has improved the most on the amount it raised the previous year.

Staff and pupils at Withymoor raised more than £96 for the appeal – more than double the amount they achieved in 2012.

Charles Scott was aged just 20 when he took part in the Normandy landings in 1944 – one of 450 volunteers from the First East Riding Yeomanry sent to the beaches to clear the area for British gliders and planes. More than 15 of his comrades were killed.

Later during the fighting Mr Scott's tank was hit. He survived despite suffering injuries to his face. He was awarded the Queen's Medal for his actions. Upon returning home following the conflict he joined the British Legion and devoted himself to the Poppy Appeal to honour comrades who had not made it home.

He became president of the Quarry Bank branch and raised thousands of pounds for the appeal over the years.

Mr Scott died four years ago but his son, Colin, grandchildren Kerrie and Dean and now his great-granddaughter are continuing his legacy.

Savannah, who attends Peters Hill Primary, plans to continue helping with the appeal. Colin said: "Savannah is now the fourth generation of our family to get involved in helping to raise money for the Poppy Appeal.

"She joins us on the collection days and explains to people what the appeal is all about.

"All of the members love her taking part. She is a little angel and we are very proud she is carrying on a legacy started by her great-grandfather."

Golden memories – Charles Scott proudly holds his great-grandaughter Savannah

Charles Scott pictured in uniform during his Second World War service

More than 800 are on donor list

MORE than 800 people are waiting for organ transplants in the West Midlands – and 17 have died in the region since April while on the waiting list, figures show.

NHS Blood andTransplant wants to encourage more people to sign up to the donor register and discuss the option with their family. There are a total of 554,000 registered donors in the Black Country and 305,000 in Staffordshire.

Fewer than 5,000 people each year die in circumstances where they can donate their organs, meaning there is always a need for more donations.

Ben Cole is a team manager with NHS Blood and Transplant's Midlands organ donation team. He said that when families agree to donation specialist nurses guide them through the process. "We want to ensure that more people get the lifesaving transplant they need,"added Mr Cole.

To join the NHS Organ Donor Register, visit the website www.organdonation. nhs.uk or call 0300 123 23 23.

Meanwhile, Tipton two-year-old boy Gaurav Bains at last got a bone marrow match and his essential operation at Birmingham Children's Hospital just before Christmas.

NEWS

User's petition on ring ride cutbacks

A RING and Ride user has launched a petition against transport budget cuts. Gillian Sedgewick has learning difficulties and has been using the service to travel to and from her local day centre for more than five years.

But she is worried she could struggle after Centro revealed the service is facing cuts. The 56-year-old, of Moxley, says vulnerable people should not have to bear the brunt of the cuts. She has already collected 46 signatures.

Options

Her 85-year-old mother and carer Gwendoline, said: "Gillian relies on the service and if it was cut or if it only ran at certain times, she would be stuck in the house because catching two or three buses would just be too much for her. Since my husband died a few years ago, there isn't anyone else who could get her from A to B."

The proposals revealed by Centro are part of a £14 million package of cuts.

John McNicholas, chairman of Centro, said reducing future funding of the Ring and Ride service was just one of a number of options being explored.

Don pitches in with backing for rebirth of football club

TWO former Midlands heroes are giving their support to campaigners who are aiming to relaunch an historic football club dating back almost 140 years.

Wolves legends Don Goodman and Steve Daley are to host a sportsmen's evening in aid of Darlaston Town FC, which is believed to be the second oldest in the country.

The future of the club was thrown into doubt earlier this year after it was pulled from the league ahead of the new season. Fans joined forces to set up a committee in September to raise the £5,000 needed to cover rent, registration fees and kits to secure the future of a team in Darlaston. A flood of donations means they are optmistic of being able to have Darlaston Town (1874) FC competing in the league for 2014/15.

Former Wolves, West Brom and Walsall goalscorer Goodman who is now a Sky Sports and radio pundit Don Goodman will be guest speaker for the sportsman dinner on April 4 to raise funds.

Comedian

Ex-Wanderers and Manchester City midfielder Steve Daley will also be on the bill while comedian Ian Sludge Lees acts as compere.

The event takes place at Darlaston Town Hall, Victoria Road, Darlaston, with tickets £17 or a table of 10 for £150.

For more information call 01922 658080 or alternatively you can email chambers568@btinternet.com

Speaker – Don Goodman

Nine metal thefts per day over the past year

METAL thieves struck on average nine times every day in the West Midlands over the past year. But measures to ban cash payments for metal at scrapyards appear to be working.

Nationally, there were 20,151 cases from April to June 2012 but this fell to 12,076 in January to March of last year. In the West Midlands, the second largest police force area in the country, there were 3,427 cases of metal theft reported over the whole year – more than nine a day. Staffordshire Police dealt with 1,234 cases and West Mercia with 716.

Dudley South MP Chris Kelly, chairman of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Combating Metal Theft, said: "Metal theft has a huge impact and costs the economy around £220 million a year. This crime affects everyone – from the stealing of cables that delay someone's rail journey home to the shocking theft of war memorials.

Taskforce

"That is why the Government has tightened the net around rogue sellers and funded a new taskforce to crack down on metal theft."

Last year the Government clamped down by banning all scrap metal dealers from trading in cash. Dealers were told they had to instead pay for metal with a cheque or electronic transfer. However, some dealers have been taking advantage of a loophole in the new law by cashing in cheques on their premises

Police also got new powers of entry to tackle illegal trading in metal yards. And last month the Scrap Metal Dealers Act came into force requiring dealers to be licensed.

First voice of Beacon Radio dies at age of 65

THE man who was the first voice ever heard on Beacon Radio has died.

Radio presenter Mike Baker opened the station in Wolverhampton in 1976 and worked in radio for four decades, including on Heart FM and Classic Gold.

The DJ was aged 65 and tributes have poured in from friends and former colleagues who say he was one of the great broadcasters.

Mr Baker worked all over the country with stints in London with Capital Radio, as well as on offshore stations Radio Caroline and Radio Veronica.

After launching Beacon Radio in Tettenhall Road, he also worked at Lantern FM in Devon.

Presenter —Mike Baker

Influence

Born near Chelmsford near Essex, he was originally a radio and TV engineer who made the switch onto the airwaves.

Since 2005 he had been a consultant, with clients including Eurostar.

BBC Radio journalist John Barnes was among those to pay tribute on Twitter. He said: "Terribly sad to hear of the passing of Mike Baker. One of the great broadcasters. The man who made me want to work in radio. RIP Mike."

Former colleague at Beacon Radio Andy Swift added: "Sad news. First voice of Beacon Radio Mike Baker has died. An influence that led me to broadcasting. He'll be missed by so many."

Tim Beech, managing editor at BBC Shropshire, said: "Very sad to hear about the death of former Beacon Radio presenter Mike Baker. Helped to create a great local station. Listened lots to him."

1D album named as biggest seller of 2013

ONE Direction's latest album Midnight Memories has become the biggest selling album of 2013.

The album – the third to be released by the boyband – has enjoyed a late surge to become the best seller of the year.

Midnight Memories was only released in the last week of November. But it has racked up almost 700,000 sales in just a few weeks.

The boyband, which includes Wolverhampton's Liam Payne, shot ahead of Emeli Sande's album Our Version of Events to take this year's crown.

It claimed the top spot with 685,000 sales compared to Sande's 683,000 copies.

1D's top selling album

Liam, aged 20, who is originally from Bushbury, said: "This tops an amazing year for us.

The band is preparing for what could be the first ever billion-dollar tour. Huge ticket sales have already seen this year's Where We Are tour sell out at locations across the world.

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NEWS

Bright idea to cut bills and carbon footprint

Pedmore Technology College marks the installation with Jo Dufue, David Vander and Rafael Osuna, head Gareth Lloyd, Power Your Future chief executive Maria Wrigley and college communications manager Lorraine Turner

ROOTOP solar panels have been fitted at a Stourbridge school to help reduce energy bills.

The work at Pedmore Technology College and Community School was the 100th installation for the Power Your Future Solar for Schools Programme.

Members of the team visited the school to explain the solar programme and work with teams of students in science classes.

They covered a range of topics from finance and energy cost savings to how solar panels work.

They met with the school's eco council to discuss how they could continue to lessen the school's carbon footprint and become more sustainable.

Save

Headteacher Gareth Lloyd said: "We are really excited about this installation. This will allow us to save on our school's energy costs in the future, redirecting the saving to buy additional resources for students.

"It also means we are educating our students and staff about energy use and management, the use of sustainable energy sources as an alternative to fossil fuels together with the need to reduce carbon emissions. We all need to understand more about long-term environmental challenges and how we can use solar power to help make a difference to all our futures."

Chief executive of the Power Your Future programme, Maria Wrigley, said: "Our team thoroughly enjoyed working with the students at Pedmore who are really engaged in current environmental issues.

"Year 8's perceptive and technical questions kept our engineer very busy," she added.

Power Your Future helps schools throughout the UK in reducing their costs and carbon emissions.

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MEMORY LANE

Oldbury Rep – a scene from Merchant of Venice, 1956

Beginnings – Oldbury Parish Rooms, where it all started

The theatre group in a scene from Red Peppers in 1956

Barlow Playhouse, which is now the Barlow Theatre

A very young Doreen seen on stage at the theatre as Aladdin in 1955

Panto – Georgina Smith and Aiden Colwell

Doreen Bastable, aged 85

The shows go on

by Adam Grinsell

THEY HAVE survived a world war and an arson attack which completely gutted their theatre, but as the new year begins, one amateur dramatics group will be celebrating its 75th season.

Started in 1939, The Oldbury Repertory Players, or Oldbury Rep as they are better known, are currently staging their 490th major production – Jack And The Beanstalk.

Over the years more than 1,000 different people have graced their stage, including three generations of the same families. Relationships have also been forged within the group, with some meeting their spouses on stage.

One of those to meet their partners at the group was Doreen Bastable, aged 85, who has been chairman of the Rep for 35 years and a member for 70 years since she was 15.

Mrs Bastable, from Mucklow Hill in Halesowen, said: "My husband Daniel was a builder, and he helped to make the theatre what it is today – he helped to reconstruct the building when we bought it. We were married in 1959 after I met him a couple of years before when I was performing."

Mr Bastable was also very involved in the reconstruction of the theatre after an arson attack destroyed almost everything in the 1972. Mrs Bastable added: "That was a blow, but we raised ourselves from the ashes."

The Oldbury Repertory Players were formed by the attendees of an elocution night class at Oldbury Technical School just before the outbreak of the Second World War, and started in the Oldbury Parish Rooms.

Their first performance was a self-grown stageshow called Tonight At 7.30, involving various sketches, and they continued right through the war.

"It was a struggle to start with," Mrs Bastable said. "People were being called up to the forces or to do shift work, but we did survive."

As the company continued to grow, it purchased the Methodist Chapel and School in Spring Street, now Spring Walk, in Langley, for £1,700 thanks to an interest free loan from the company's then president CT Barlow.

Over the next few years the chapel was converted into a theatre and in January 1956 opened as The Barlow Playhouse – it is now known as Barlow Theatre, and has its own bar and 173-seat auditorium.

The parents of company secretary Christopher Smith, 56, were founder members of the group, and he also met his wife Lisa there.

His daughters Cassandra and Georgina have both performed with the group too – Georgina is playing the Princess in the latest production.

He said: "The company gives you a comradeship, it's a friendship – we have a great social life with things like quiz nights, so it's not just about rehearsing and putting on plays."

Company members, which in the past have included Old Hill comedienne and former Eastenders actress Josie Lawrence in their ranks, also build the sets, do the lighting, work behind the bars and do the marketing. It receives no grants, so the only way it makes any money is by 'putting bums on seats'.

Jack And The Beanstalk takes place from January 10 to 18. To buy tickets and for more information about the company, including how to become a member, see **www.oldburyrep.org**

If you're affected by dementia, Alzheimer's Society in the Black Country is here for you.

The range of services we provide include:

- Home care and support services in Dudley and Sandwell
- Saturday day club in Sandwell
- Dementia Support Workers – available in Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton
- Dementia Cafés – operating in Dudley, Walsall and Wolverhampton

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ADVERTISING FEATURE

Help is at hand for carers of sufferers

LIVING with someone with dementia, or being a family carer who offers support to a loved one will at times be challenging.

You will see a person you care for change, they are likely to become forgetful and may well start to struggle with things that they have done routinely over the years, such as cooking or taking part in ordinary social activities.

There may also be other concerns which you will not have considered in the past; for example how to arrange for care services, which benefits a person with dementia may be entitled to, or discussing plans for the future.

At these times Alzheimer's Society has experienced and trained staff to help you. We have been providing care and support services for people with all types of dementia, their carers and families within the Black Country for almost thirty years.

Alzheimer's Society provides:

● Registered care services, based in people's homes, which give short breaks for carers and meaningful and stimulating activities for people with dementia helping them to maintain a level of independence and to feel less isolated.

● Dementia support workers provide emotional and practical support to carers and family members by helping them to understand dementia, to find coping strategies and to signpost or refer them to other organisations who can provide specialist help and assistance.

● A dementia adviser in Sandwell who works directly with people in the early stages of dementia to make sure they are taking an active role in the community doing things that they enjoy and are meaningful to them.

● Dementia cafés provide a safe place for people with dementia, their families and friends to meet others in a similar situation for information, support and social interaction.

● An information worker in Wolverhampton who delivers presentations about dementia to a range of organisations from community groups and schools to GP surgeries.

The Alzheimer's Society provides both emotional and practical support

For more information please contact Alzheimer's Society Black Country office by emailing blackcountryoffice@alzheimers.org.uk or call 0121 521 3020.

Alzheimer's Society is the UK's leading support and research charity for people with dementia, their families and carers.

Young singer is a rising star

A SCHOOLGIRL is celebrating success after winning a music award and making it through to the regional final of a singing competition.

Holly Wright picked up the Performing Arts Award at the Sandwell Star Awards and also got through to the regional heats of the Teen Star UK open mic competition.

The 13-year-old from Cradley Heath attends Hillcrest School and Community College in Netherton. Mother Michelle, 46, of Forest Drive, Cradley Heath, said: "She was invited to the Sandwell Star Awards and was awarded for performing arts and then she got through to the regional final of Teen Star UK at the NEC. She has progressed to the final which is being held in Huddersfield."

Holly Wright, aged 13, has sung her way to the final of Teen Star UK

Hospital bosses refute whistleblower claims over patients being restrained

A WHISTLEBLOWER has accused Dudley's hospital trust of restraining patients against their will. Bosses at Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust, which runs Russells Hall, 'emphatically refute' claims that patients had been unlawfully restrained.

The Care Quality Commission is looking into the allegations, following a request from the Department of Health.

Former head of security at the Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust, John Marchant, has made the claims.

He had the role for more than 10 years before being made redundant in December 2012.

Mr Marchant called in top barristers from London to give him advice on his concerns. Methods allegedly used ranged from telling someone to go back to their bed, to pushing a patient back into their room or holding the door closed so they could not leave, he said.

Mr Marchant said: "In many cases we are talking about patients known as 'bed blockers', elderly people unable to return home or with no residential care unit to go to.

Frustrated

"In these cases detention is being used simply because the patient becomes so frustrated at not even being able to go out for a walk in the hospital grounds because there are no staff to accompany them. Some would go back to their rooms if you asked them but others would have to be closed in and it would be very distressing for them," he claimed.

Paula Clark, chief executive of the trust, said: "We emphatically refute the suggestion that we have ever unlawfully restrained patients. The health and wellbeing of our patients is our absolute priority. It is our priority not to restrain patients.

"In the very small instances where this is necessary, it is to prevent harm to patients. We adopt a reasonable and proportionate approach that reflects our Restraint of Adult Patient Policy.

"Two years ago security staff expressed concern about being asked to restrain patients without a mental capacity assessment being carried out. We offered them our assurance that dynamic mental capacity assessments were always undertaken.

"We continue to improve our practice and training around caring for patients who lack capacity either temporarily or ongoing," added Ms Clark.

A Department of Health spokesman said: "These are very serious allegations and we have passed this information to the Care Quality Commission for further investigation."

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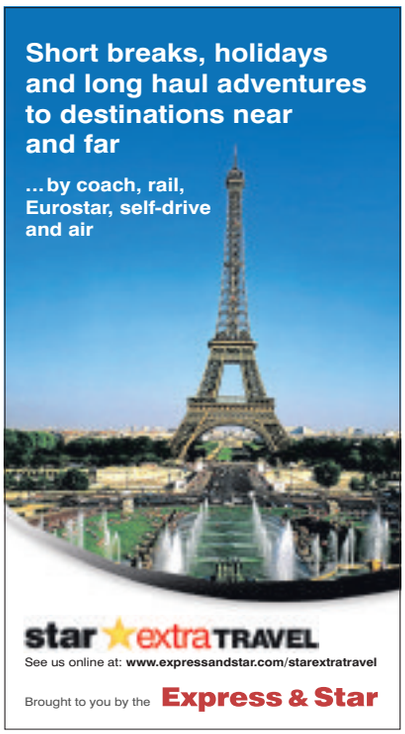

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NEWS

Law firm help air ambulance to earn money from estates

The legal team from Wall James Chappell in Stourbridge with members of the Midlands Air Ambulance crew

STOURBRIDGE-BASED law firm Wall James Chappell has acted as lead advisor for the Midlands Air Ambulance on the charity's conversion to trust corporation status.

The move will enable the charity to administer estates and is of particular benefit due to the significant legacy income of the service.

Philip Chapman, head of corporate and charities at Wall James Chappell, explained: "In cases where the executors of a Will cannot, or do not wish to administer the estate, the charity can now do so with its trust corporation status.

Administer

"Additionally, if a supporter contacts the charity and asks them to act as executor of his or her estate which he or she is intending to leave to the charity, the charity will be able to reassure him or her that they will be able to act.

"As a large charity, the Midlands Air Ambulance is able to employ qualified staff and can therefore impartially administer a trust or estate in-house."

Hanna Sebright, chief executive for Midlands Air Ambulance Charity said: "Four in every 10 missions we undertake are funded by a gift in a will, so to have trust corporation status to support our donors and carry out their wishes, has come as very welcome news. For charities that receive significant income from legacies, trust corporation status is worth considering."

For more information on legacy giving with the Midlands Air Ambulance Charity, contact the team on 0800 8 40 20 40 or visit www.midlandsairambulance.com

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NEETA Black beauty, classy, intelligent 21yrs, loves to enjoy life, have lots of fun and be spoilt, give me a call. Any age, looks and status. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409101**

HI I'm Jo, first timer, newly divorced perfect size 10, blonde, attractive, tactile and looking to fall in love again. Age unimportant, dad welcome. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409089**

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BABS 27yrs slender with dark haired passionate Italian who loves to dance, eat out, looking for nice n/s male to spend quality adult time with. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407943**

BUBBLY 60 plus lady, slim, fair hair, comfy in jeans and leather jacket, seeks similar male for friendship etc. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408859**

JOANNA 34, in need of tlc, wining, dining being treated like the princess I am, looking for sugar daddy, that someone special to love me. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408869**

KIRSTY blonde blue eyed size 12 nurse, enjoys cosy nights, driving, holidays, socialising, WLTM broadminded male for adult fun. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409259**

KATH blonde independent female, employed with OHAC looking for fun and laughter with likeminded nice easy going male, any age. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407955**

SAM, 35yrs, own business, sexy, loves dressing up and married, seeks discreet man for casual meetings. Can travel anywhere. ACA. **Tel No: 0905 002 1961 Box No: 408297**

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SHARON very attractive British black lady, sexy size 6 looking for white male to fall in love with. Beautiful people can be lonely too. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409263**

ANNA, busty mature lady seeks no strings discreet meetings with male any age or location. **Tel No: 0905 002 1952 Box No: 366019**

MID naughty forties female looking fun, thrills and discreet meets, give me a call, you won't be disappointed. Any age with own accommodation. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409109**

ANITA very attractive black female, seeking mature white/Asian man to enjoy uncomplicated relationship with no ties. Any age, pls contact me, I'm very lonely. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408505**

SUSIE, seeks fifty shades of grey with guy any age but must be discreet, call and I will explain why. **Tel: No. 0905 002 1953 Box No: 407321**

68YR old lady, likes gardening, meals out, days out, looking for sincere gent to share time with. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408413**

JENNY single independent attractive lady, tall and leggy, sensual and looking for very special male friend. Only genuine callers pls. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408285**

CHRIS blue eyed blonde single female, lots of interests, loves travel, beach, nights in/out, looking for mature sincere gent for possible ltr. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407615**

ATTRACTIVE female, young 49, 5ft 7ins, blonde hair, blue eyes, slim, genuine, loyal, easygoing, GSOH, seeks tall, handsome male, 40-50 for fun times, friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 406135**

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SLIM active lady, 60's, N/S, seeks honest, kind gent, 57-62 for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407693**

ANNABELLA board attractive 30 something nurse wanting healing hands for no strings fun. No TLC required. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407449**

SUE attractive lonely brunette who loves eves in/out, music, WLTM someone sincere to love and get close to, why not give me a call? **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 407021**

MARIA gorgeous outgoing bbw 27, good fun, caring, romantic, looking for that special someone to share life with. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408733**

KIM attractive single lady new to area looking for meet new friends and maybe a new love interest. I have many hobbies and am interesting to know, pls call me. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408489**

TAYLOR attractive very busty curvy black female looking for fun times with open-minded male who is also looking for fun. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408311**

BETHANY 25yr old blonde, slim size 10 with great personality, looking for nice guy to share my life with, single dad welcome. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408253**

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FEMALE many interests, seeks male, 40-55 for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408537**

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MALE likes nights out, holidays, seeking nice female for friendship, fun and maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409363**

GARY 40, tall, dark hair, seeks female, 30-50 for fun and LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409207**

SINGLE white 40's male, looking for strictly no strings adult fun, any age/race/looks, genuine callers. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409613**

LOCAL businessman, seeking special friend for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409585**

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GENT 55, slightly mad, but not bad, will make you glad you answered his ad! **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408973**

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LONELY male, 55, seeks Indian/Jamaican female, 25 plus for sincere relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408957**

ATTRACTIVE male, 55, seeks older female, 50-70 for close, adult fun. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 397189**

MARK 44, 6ft, dark hair, businessman, interesting, seeking sporty female for meals out, day trips, country walks etc. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408571**

GENEROUS male, 6ft, GSOH, likes music, DIY, seeks attractive lady to spoil and pamper. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409019**

TONY 55, dark hair, 6ft, confident, outgoing, seeks mature, attractive female, 68 plus, genuine ad. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 408989**

FUN loving male, 47, lots to give, looking for genuine lady for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409159**

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NEWS

Peggy devotes 60 years to German shepherd dogs

Halesowen dog lover Peggy Jinks, 90, with her six-year-old German shepherd Carly

Peggy in her 20s with her dog Mandy

PEGGY Jinks has devoted almost 60 years of her life to breeding and caring for her German shepherd dogs.

But the tables were turned on the popular dog lover when fellow enthusiasts and friends threw a party marking her 90th birthday and achievements.

Members of the Birmingham south branch of the British Association for German Shepherd Dogs organised the party at the Tipton Sports and Social Club. They even had a birthday cake made in her honour, complete with a photograph showing her in her 20s with her first German shepherd, called Mandy.

Peggy joined the association in 1953 and retired as branch secretary in 2012. "The breed are so loveable and you can train them to do anything you want. I would not swap them for any other breed," said Peggy, of Middle Tree Road, Halesowen.

She joined the branch after being persuaded by her friend Marie O'Grady. They originally met on land where the Pebble Mill Studios once stood in Edgbaston.

The group, which now has around 40 members, runs dog obedience training for puppies and older dogs. It is now based at Ormiston Sandwell Community Academy, in Tividale.

Peggy has looked after 10 dogs over the years but did not think that she would have another after losing 13-year-old Ellie four-and-a-half years ago. But six months later her friends found an abandoned German shepherd and Peggy agreed to take her in and named her Carly.

Among Peggy's roles at the branch was to organise an annual open dog obedience show for the branch at Coseley School, attracting more than 1,000 entries every year.

Young gymnast's victory is dedicated to grandad

Korben Fellows, aged 11, of Coseley, who has won the Great Britain gymnastics championship for the under-12s

WHEN he had sad news on the eve of competing in a national gymnastics contest, young Korben Fellows vowed: "I'll do it for Grandad."

The 11-year-old from Coseley was devastated when he heard his beloved grandfather, Frank Hale, aged 83, of Moxley, had died. Korben was preparing for the Great Britain under-12s championships in Glasgow when he heard the news.

Cried

"Korben cried himself to sleep that night," said his mother Lisa, 41.

"But he said he was going to do it for his grandad and Korben was amazing in the competition."

The talented gymnast scooped gold in the pommel, rings and high bar disciplines. As well as being crowned overall champion, Korben, a Coseley School pupil, won the Nik Stuart award for the 'most amazing talent'.

Korben lives with his parents Wayne and Lisa, brothers Kai, nine, and Klay, six, and sister Keirie, three, in Legg Lane.

Along with his siblings, he attends the City of Birmingham Gymnastics Club. He was talent-spotted at the age of just 18 months by coach Lee Woolls during a play session at Earls High School, Halesowen.

Frank Hale and baby Korben

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THEATRE REVIEW

Here come the girls... as Wendy saves Peter

Wendy and Peter Pan, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

WENDY is no helpless damsel in distress in writer Ella Hickson's radical revamp of the classic JM Barrie story about the boy who never grows up.

In fact, too many boys refuse to grow up and face their responsibilities. That's one of the themes introduced in this gently feminist take on a timeless fantasy from the Edwardian era.

Hickson and director Jonathan Munby have crafted a thoughtful return to Neverland in which Fiona Button's feisty Wendy Darling, after flying out of the nursery window to the magical island with Pan and her two brothers (but no Nana the dog), becomes exasperated with the otherworldly Pan, an energetic and charismatic performance by Sam Swann.

This mischievous magic boy avoids commitment by acting the fool or the hero as he is whisked around the stage by his own troupe of bequiffed 'shadows'.

Wendy is on a mission to find her own Lost Boy, a third brother Tom whose death has divided her parents in their mutual despair – excellent performances by Andrew Woodall and Rebecca Johnson as Mr and Mrs Darling.

Actors take to the air on wires to soar above the stage in a technically brilliant Royal Shakespeare Company production in which the sets morph from London nursery to Neverland with Pan's Home Under the Ground emerging from below and a skull-prowed pirate galleon sailing across the stage.

Fiona Button as Wendy

Peter Pan, Sam Swann, carried aloft by his shadows

The silly antics of the Lost Boys – including one who gets completely the wrong idea of what pooh sticks are – get appreciative laughs, particularly from the children, and Captain Hook's pirates are a suitably scurvy and dangerous looking crew.

Guy Henry's languid Hook is too charming a rogue to be completely menacing. Hook is certainly too obsessed with catching Pan to notice Smee's doe-eyed devotion, the first mate even reveals he has picked out swatches to choose the décor for their retirement cottage once Pan is dead.

Charlotte Mills is a formidable, ample-portioned Tinkerbell with a voice like Kathy Burke, dropping her aitches as often as she douses others in fairy dust. This must be the first version of Peter Pan where an angry Tink calls Wendy "skinny arse".

Crocodile

When Wendy persuades Tinkerbell and Michelle Asante's bow-toting African warrior queen Tiger Lily to join forces with Wendy, it's the girl power trio who free Peter Pan from Hook's clutches as the crocodile – a creepy limb-folding performance by dance performer Arthur Kyeyune – finally brings the clock tick tocking time's up for the old pirate.

This is a captivating play for the young-at-heart but I sensed some of the actually very young were fidgeting as their attention began to wane during the more melancholy, dialogue-rich scenes in the second act. Maybe this was due to the two hour 45 minute length.

However, this is a production that works on a couple of levels – a fun and spectacular family show also dealing with gender politics, grief and, most movingly, as a lament for the loss of childhood innocence.

Wendy and Peter Pan continues at Stratford until March 2.

Leon Burakowski

The Snowman comes to Birmingham – see page 25

star extra TRAVEL London Theatre Breaks

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Take in a top West End show and have some free time in London for shopping and sightseeing. For the Dine and Dance option see the matinee performance before heading back to the hotel for dinner and a disco (conditions apply). For the Saturday Night option you will see the evening performance.

For both breaks the price includes a theatre ticket, overnight stay in a four-star outer London hotel, with full English breakfast (plus dinner for Dine and Dance options). Pick ups offered are Dudley, Shrewsbury, Telford, Walsall and Wolverhampton.

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**The "from" price and price bands vary for each show – see brochure for details.*

Single room supplements apply.

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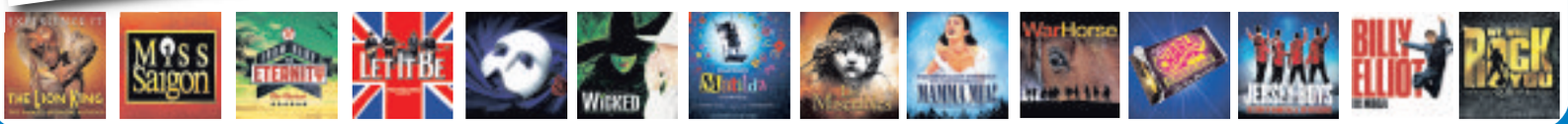

For a theatre brochure please call the promotions team on (01902) 319999 (Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm), or go expressandstar.com/starextratravel

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COMMERICAL FEATURE

Parrys blazing the trail with luxury coach travel

AWARD-winning coach tour company Parrys International is all set for a bumper year in 2014, after customer power persuaded the Cheslyn Hay firm to continue for the next few years.

After 40 successful years Managing Director Dave Parry had announced his retirement and that the firm would close, but after a huge outcry from both customers, trade and hotel suppliers, he was persuaded to change his mind.

Now it's business as usual with a fantastic programme of coach holidays, short breaks and a full investment of more than £4 million in new, luxury Coaches.

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Parrys has just released its 2014 holiday brochure packed with new and favourite tours and popular weekends.

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There will be trade exhibitors, coaches on display, special offers and lots of interesting items including the management and a star rider from Wolverhampton speedway. It will be open from 10am to 3pm.

It all takes place at the Cheslyn Hay site, Landywood Green, off Landywood Lane near Landywood Railway Station. Other Coach firms have tried to copy or follow Parrys International but the Company remains one of the most respected coach tour operators in the United Kingdom and will remain so for some years to come.

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From here we make a Lunch stop at the Oxfordshire Village of Woodstock before continuing to the Heritage Motor Museum at Gaydon.
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On this holiday a choice of hotels is offered in and around the town of Sorrento. Tiny cobbled streets, quaint squares, and home to numerous bistros and restaurants along with lofty palm trees and flowers climbing crumbling walls, this is a typical Italian town and a perfect holiday base from where to explore the region.

Excursions include a boat trip to the beautiful island of Capri, home to the famous Blue Grotto; the city of Pompeii, whose state of preservation is astonishing; a visit to the still-active volcano of Vesivius, and a visit to Naples, home to the Archaeological Museum that houses some of the finest finds from the nearby excavations.

The Amalfi coastline offers stunning views and a full day is spent driving the meandering roads, admiring the exclusive resort of Positano, the picturesque village of Amalfi and then Ravello, perched in its breathtaking location boasting delightful small cafes and the Villa Rufolo, a charming collection of medieval buildings.

INFO

- Return flights
- Seven nights half-board accommodation
- Guided tours of Pompeii and Sorrento
- Visits to Naples and Ravello
- Cruise to Capri
- Visit to the volcano of Vesuvius
- Tour of the Amalfi coast
- Services of a tour manager
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Certain entrance fees payable locally
Organised by Riviera Travel (ABTA V4744, ATOL 3430)

What's On! Stourbridge

Red Lion will host Daredevils band

THE Red Lion Folk Club in Birmingham will be hosting Black Country musicians The Bushbury Mountain Daredevils along with Stourbridge blues singer Sunjay Brayne on January 15. Brayne has just come from a tour supporting Steeleye Span and recently released an album of him playing live

The club in Vicarage Road, Kings Heath meets on Wednesdays at 7.15pm. Northern singer and raconteur Jez Lowe will also be appearing there on January 22.

For more information visit www.redlionfolkclub.co.uk.

New venture for young musicians

A NEW venture is coming to the Newhampton Arts Centre in Wolverhampton.

Fiddle player Faye Brookes is staging the Folk Lounge at the Dunkley Street venue in Whitmore Reans, which is a platform to give young musicians exposure.

The event is on January 25 from 7.30pm and tickets are £5. For more information contact 01902 572090.

Lowings back for home ground gig

STOURBRIDGE group Kim Lowings and the Greenwood will be at The Woodman Folk Club at the Ashwood Marina, Ashwood Lower Lane, Kingswinford on January 24. The group is a collective of local musicians fronted by singer Lowings. Visit www.woodmanfolk.co.uk.

Magical snowman returns to enthrall new generations

The show will be filled with all manner of familiar and wonderfully colourful characters

THE magic of Raymond Briggs' frosty friend The Snowman has been enthralling young and old alike for more than three decades and now The Birmingham Repertory Theatre is bringing him to life once again.

The stage show, based upon the book by Briggs, will run at the venue until Saturday January 18.

The Snowman tells the magical story of a young boy's adventures when his snowman miraculously comes to life on Christmas Eve.

A glittering host of international snowmen and snow women will be joined onstage by colourful characters including dancing penguins, magical reindeer, a beautiful snow princess and her abominable beau Jack Frost and Father Christmas himself.

The Snowman first appeared as a beautifully illustrated picture book by Raymond Briggs in 1978.

Performance Times: 11am, 3pm and 7pm on Saturday 11 and 18; 2pm and 7pm on Friday 10, Tuesday 14, Wednesday 15, Thursday 16 and Friday 17; 3pm Friday 17.

There will also be backstage tours on Saturdays 11 and 18 at 11am. They cost £5 (£3 concessions). Audio described performance and Touch Tours run on Sunday 12 3pm. Touch Tour starts at 1.30pm.

The magic of The Snowman

The shows are suitable for children aged four and upwards.

Tickets are£12.50 – £35 and for more information contact the box office on 0121 236 4455.

Online booking: birmingham-rep.co.uk.

Music from both sides of Atlantic

THE famous Transatlantic Sessions featuring some of the biggest names from the world of folk and acoustic music is coming to Birmingham next month.

Musicians Aly Bain and Jerry Douglas have put together another collection of world renowned musicians from both sides of the pond including Kris Drever, Shawn Colvin and Mike McGoldrick among many others.

The show at Symphony Hall is on Thursday February 6 from 7.30pm. Tickets are £27.50 plus booking fee and for more information visit www.thsh.co.uk.

Folk founders in concert as a duo

FOUNDER members of award-winning group Bellowhead, Spiers & Boden, will be playing as a duo at Wolverhampton's Civic Hall on March 18.

Double BBC Folk award winners for best duo Jon Boden and John Spiers will be coming to the venue on the back of Bellowhead's 10th anniversary bash.

Tickets are £16.50 including booking fee and for more information visit www. wolvescivic.co.uk.

Singer Sermanni set for Glee date

SCOTTISH singer/songwriter Rachel Sermanni is coming to the Glee Club, Birmingham on February 7. Tickets are £7 plus booking fee and doors open at 8.30pm. For more information visit www.glee.co.uk/birmingham.

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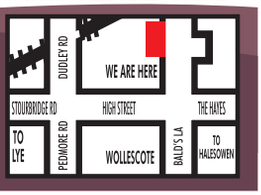

What's On!

SATURDAY'S TV 11.01.14

Listings supplied by Press Association

CHOICE

Shane Richie

Reflex
BBC1, 6.15pm
In EastEnders this week, Alfie begins planning a trip to Australia. Is it because he's already fed up of being reunited with Kat – or did Shane Richie need a break so he could host this promising new game show? Yes, the actor is getting back to his light entertainment roots with Reflex, which as the name suggests, is all about reaction times. Each week, two teams of three family members will be tested in a series of challenges designed to find out who has the speediest reflexes. And that could involve anything from being fired into the air to responding to explosions.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** The Good Cook. (R) **12.00** Football Focus. **12.45** Saturday Sportsday. **1.00** BBC News; Regional News; Weather. **1.15** Live Athletics: Great Edinburgh Cross-Country. **2.45** Live Darts: BDO World Championships. **4.30** Final Score. **5.15** BBC News; Regional News; Weather. **5.30** Dynamo: Magician Impossible.

6.15 Reflex. New series. Shane Richie hosts this game show in which two families battle each other in a series of physical and mental challenges. The first contestants are from London and Essex.

7.00 The Voice UK. New series. Kylie Minogue and Ricky Wilson join Tom Jones and Will.i.am as coaches in the return of the chair-spinning singing contest.

8.30 The National Lottery: Who Dares Wins. Nick Knowles hosts the game show in which two pairs of strangers compete by listing as much as they know about given subjects.

9.20 Casualty. Lily and new doctor Ethan try to diagnose what is wrong with a teacher showing strange symptoms, while Zoe and Tess fight to save the life of Dixie's girlfriend.

10.10 BBC News; Weather.

10.30 Match of the Day. Including highlights of Hull City v Chelsea; National Lottery Update.

11.55 The Football League Show. Highlights of today's games in the Championship, League One and League Two.

1.10 Weatherview. **1.15** BBC News.

BBC2

6.00 This Is BBC Two. **6.30 Film:** The Informer. (1935) **7.55 Film:** I Married a Witch. (1942) **9.10** Life on Earth. (R) **10.05** Life on Earth. (R) **11.00** Fred Dibnah's Made in Britain. (R) **11.30** Great British Railway Journeys. (R) **12.00** The A to Z of TV Cooking. **12.45** The A to Z of TV Gardening. **12.50 Film:** Summer Magic. (1963) **2.35 Film:** The Go-Between. (1971) **4.30** Live Darts: BDO World Championships.

6.00 Flog It! Contestants in Swansea hope a Moorcroft vase will beat their Hartlepool rivals' Clarice Cliff pottery at auction. (R)

7.00 Nature's Weirdest Events. Chris Packham investigates reports of fish "walking" out of the water in Florida, bees in France that are making multicoloured honey, and trees oozing a blood-red liquid. (R)

8.00 Dad's Army. Captain Mainwaring enlists an unusual recruit. (R)

8.30 Morecambe & Wise: The Curtains. Penelope Keith presents a look through the archives at the parts of the comedy duo's shows in which they chatted to each other – and their guests – in front of the stage curtains. (R)

9.30 QI XL. Extended edition. With Sue Perkins, Reginald D Hunter and Jimmy Carr.

10.15 Film: Burke and Hare. (2010) Premiere. Comedy horror, starring Simon Pegg.

11.40 Darts: BDO World Championships. Action from the eighth day at the Lakeside Country Club.

12.30 Film: They Shoot Horses, Don't They? (1969) **2.25** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Pat & Stan. **6.10** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.20** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.30** Dino Dan. (R) **6.40** Dino Dan. (R) **6.50** Canimals. (R) **6.55** Canimals. (R) **7.05** Canimals. (R) **7.15** Sooty. (R) **7.25** Sooty. (R) **7.40** Almost Naked Animals. (R) **7.50** Almost Naked Animals. (R) **8.05** Horrid Henry. (R) **8.15** Horrid Henry. (R) **8.30** Victorious. **9.00** Deadtime Stories. (R) **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** Dinner Date. (R) **10.30** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **11.25** Countrywise. (R) **11.45** ITV News; Weather. **11.55 Film:** Rest in Peace, Mrs Columbo. (1990) **1.55** The Chase. (R) **2.55** Boyzone at 20: No Matter What. (R) **3.55** Show Me the Telly. (R) **4.55** Regional Programme ; Weather.**5.05** ITV News; Weather. **5.20 Film:** Ice Age: The Meltdown. (2006)

7.00 Splash! Another line-up of celebrities compete for two places in the semi-final of the diving contest, under the tutelage of Tom Daley. Hosted by Vernon Kay and Gabby Logan.

8.30 Take Me Out. A psychic single dad, a bodybuilder, a train enthusiast and a children's party planner try to win a date with one of 30 single women.

9.45 The Jonathan Ross Show. The host invites Hollywood actor Aaron Eckhart, ice-dance duo Torvill and Dean, funnyman Griff Rhys Jones and businesswoman Karren Brady for a chat. Kodaline provide the music.

10.45 ITV News; Weather.

11.00 Film: Miami Vice. (2006) Crime thriller based on the 1980s TV series, starring Colin Farrell and Jamie Foxx.

1.20 Jackpot247. **3.00** Ladette to Lady: Australia. (R) **3.45** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.10 American Football Playoff Highlights. (R) **7.00** Trans World Sport. **8.00** The Morning Line. **9.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **9.30** How I Met Your Mother. (R) **10.00** How I Met Your Mother. (R) **10.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **11.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **11.25** The Simpsons. (R) **11.55** The Simpsons. (R) **12.30** The Taste. (R) **1.30** Channel 4 Racing. **4.05** Channel 4 News. **4.35** Come Dine with Me. (R) **5.10** Come Dine with Me. (R) **5.40** Come Dine with Me. (R)

6.10 Come Dine with Me. Engineer Brian Hodges hosts the penultimate dinner party in Nottingham and decides to rope in his local butcher to help out in the kitchen. (R)

6.45 Come Dine with Me. Barry Dickman hosts the final dinner party in Nottingham. (R)

7.15 Film: Crocodile Dundee. (1986) An Australian hunter with a larger-than-life reputation accompanies a reporter from the Outback to the urban jungle of Manhattan. Comedy, starring Paul Hogan and Linda Kozlowski.

9.00 Hostages. New series. A surgeon faces a moral dilemma when masked men take her family hostage and order her to kill her next patient – the US president. Thriller, starring Toni Collette.

10.00 Film: Wanted. (2008) Action adventure, starring James McAvoy, Angelina Jolie and Morgan Freeman.

12.00 Film: House of Flying Daggers. (2004) **2.10** Hollyoaks. (R) **4.20** Deal or No Deal. (R) **5.15** Countdown. (R) **5.55** Kirstie's Vintage Gems. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **10.00** Power Rangers: Megaforce. **10.35** Slugterra. **11.00** Access. **11.05** Celebrity Big Brother: Live Eviction. (R) **12.30** World's Busiest Hotel. (R) **1.30** Police Interceptors. (R) **2.30 Film:** Columbo: How to Dial a Murder. (1978) **4.05** Diagnosis Murder. (R) **5.05** Diagnosis Murder. (R)

6.05 Mr & Mrs Murder. Charlie and Nicola are called to clean up a crime scene at a golf club after a dispute between dog walkers and players results in murder.

7.00 CSI: NY. A teenager is shot in front of his younger brother. (R)

7.45 NCIS. A missing Navy lieutenant's car is found covered in blood. (R)

8.40 NCIS. A Russian man becomes the prime suspect when a petty officer is found dead, but receives protection from the Department of Homeland Security. Drama, starring Mark Harmon. (R)

9.40 5 News Weekend.

9.45 Celebrity Big Brother. Highlights of the famous housemates' past 24 hours under the all-seeing eye of Big Brother, as they try to get used to living alongside one another.

10.45 Celebrity Big Brother's Bit on the Psych. Psychological analysis of the housemates' behaviour.

12.00 SuperCasino. **3.05** True CSI. (R) **4.00** Wildlife SOS. (R) **4.20** Make It Big. (R) **4.50** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **5.00** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.05** Hana's Helpline. (R) **5.20** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.25** The Funky Valley Show. (R) **5.40** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **5.50** Hana's Helpline. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three
7.00 Great Movie Mistakes IV: May the Fourth Be with You **7.30** Top Gear **8.30 Film:** Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides (2011) **10.40** Family Guy

BBC Four
7.00 Nasa – Triumph and Tragedy **8.00** A Very British Murder with Lucy Worsley **9.00** The Bridge **11.00** Tubular Bells: The Mike Oldfield Story

ITV2
2.30 Film: Curly Sue (1991) **4.30** You've Been Framed! **6.30 Film:** Evan Almighty (2007) **8.30 Film:** Tomorrow Never Dies (1997) **10.50** The Magaluf Weekender **11.55 Film:** The Interpreter (2004)

ITV3
9.05am Agatha Christie's Poirot. Back-to-back episodes. **11.00** Prime Suspect. A country club manager is found dead.

ITV4
3.45 Film: A Reason to Live, A Reason to Die (1972) **5.35 Film:** The Battle of Midway (1976) **8.10 Film:** Police Academy 7: Mission to Moscow (1994) **10.00 Film:** Firefox (1982)

E4
4.00 2 Broke Girls **5.00** Rules of Engagement **6.00** How I Met Your Mother **7.00** The Big Bang Theory **8.00** The Tomorrow People **9.00 Film:** What Happens in Vegas (2008) **11.00** The Big Bang Theory **11.30** Rude Tube: Epic Skills

Film4
3.10 King Solomon's Mines (1985) **5.05** Night at the Museum (2006) **7.15** Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer (2007) Sci-fi adventure sequel, starring Ioan Gruffudd. **9.00** Dogma (1999) Comedy fantasy, with Matt Damon, Ben Affleck and Linda Fiorentino. **11.25** Evil Dead II (1987)

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SUNDAY'S TV 12.01.14

Listings supplied by Press Association

CHOICE

Simon Reeve

The Tea Trail with Simon Reeve
BBC2, 8pm
Adventurer Simon Reeve is getting out and about again. He's not long back from his jaunt to the other side of the world after his exploration of Australia, but you can't keep this man on terra firma for too long, so this time he's jetting off to Africa where he's looking into the stories behind our favourite beverage – tea. He's in the Kenyan coastal city of Mombasa, where most of the leaves for tea bags are bought at auction, before moving on through eastern Africa to meet some of the millions of people who pick, pack and transport it.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **7.35** Match of the Day. (R) **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** The Big Questions. **11.00** Sunday Politics. **12.15** MOTD2 Extra. **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** Moving On. (R) **2.00** Bargain Hunt. (R) **2.45** Real Lives Reunited. (R) **3.15** Escape to the Country. (R) **4.00** Songs of Praise. **4.35** Dolphins – Spy in the Pod. (R) **5.35** BBC News; Regional News; Weather.

6.00 Countryfile. John Craven and Helen Skelton head to Surrey, where he explores the countryside favoured by Arthur Conan Doyle and she talks to an artist with an all-consuming passion for horses.

7.00 Celebrity Mastermind. With Tony Livesey, Ava Vidal, Monty Halls and the Rev Richard Coles. Last in the series.

7.30 Antiques Roadshow. From the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts in Norwich.

8.30 Sherlock. The consulting detective takes on master blackmailer Charles Augustus Magnussen, a man who knows the secrets of every person of importance in the Western world. Last in the series.

10.00 BBC News; Regional News; Weather.

10.25 Match of the Day 2. Including highlights of Newcastle United v Manchester City.

11.25 The Revolution Will Be Televised. Satirical comedy sketches. James and Barnaby visit Brussels.

11.55 Film: Cemetery Junction. (2010) Comedy drama, starring Christian Cooke.

1.25 Weatherview. **1.30** BBC News.

BBC2

6.00 This Is BBC Two. **6.40 Film:** A Woman's Secret. (1949) Mystery, starring Maureen O'Hara. **8.05** Monty Don's French Gardens. (R) **9.05** Countryfile. (R) **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **11.30** Paul Hollywood's Pies & Puds. (R) **12.15** Paul Hollywood's Pies & Puds. (R) **1.00** Live Snooker: The Masters. Mark Selby v Mark Davis. **5.00** Ski Sunday. **5.45** Live Darts: BDO World Championships. Coverage of the men's final.

8.00 The Tea Trail with Simon Reeve. The adventurer examines the tea industry in eastern Africa, meeting some of the millions of people involved in picking, packing and transporting it to the UK.

9.00 Operation Grand Canyon with Dan Snow. The historian and his team conclude their recreation of the pioneering 280-mile expedition through the natural wonder that was led by explorer John Wesley Powell in 1869.

10.00 Film: Let Me In. (2010) Premiere. A bullied boy befriends a mysterious girl, unaware she is a vampire who is behind a recent series of killings. Horror remake, with Chloe Grace Moretz and Kodi Smit-McPhee.

11.50 Snooker: The Masters. Stuart Bingham v John Higgins. Hazel Irvine presents action from the second match in round one of the non-ranking tournament at Alexandra Palace in London.

12.40 Snooker Extra. Mark Selby v Mark Davis. **2.40** Sign Zone: Countryfile. (R) **3.35** Holby City. Jac goes into early labour. (R) **4.35** This Is BBC Two. Preview of upcoming programmes.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Pat & Stan. **6.10** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.20** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.30** Dino Dan. (R) **6.40** Dino Dan. (R) **6.50** Canimals. (R) **6.55** Canimals. (R) **7.05** Canimals. (R) **7.15** Sooty. (R) **7.25** Sooty. (R) **7.40** Almost Naked Animals. (R) **7.50** Almost Naked Animals. (R) **8.05** Horrid Henry. (R) **8.15** Horrid Henry. (R) **8.30** Victorious. **9.00** Deadtime Stories. (R) **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** Dickinson's Real Deal. (R) **10.30** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **11.30** ITV News; Weather. **11.35** Inside the National Trust. **12.35** The Crocodile Hunter Diaries. (R) **1.35** Catchphrase. (R) **2.20** Splash! (R) **3.50** All Star Mr & Mrs. (R) **4.50** The Chase: Celebrity Special. (R) **5.50** Regional Programme; Weather.

6.00 ITV News; Weather.

6.15 Dancing on Ice. The second seven celebrities take to the ice.

7.45 All Star Family Fortunes. With Paul Potts and Ann Widdecombe.

8.30 Dancing on Ice: The Skate Off. Two more couples leave the competition.

9.00 It'll Be Alright on the Night's Best of the Worst. Compilation of clangers from the programme's history.

10.00 ITV News at Ten; Weather.

10.15 Birds of a Feather. Dorien discovers she has no money. Sitcom, with Pauline Quirke and Linda Robson. (R)

10.45 Piers Morgan's Life Stories: Mary Berry. The Great British Bake Off judge looks back on her life and career. (R)

11.45 River Monsters. (R)

12.10 The Store. **2.15** The Jeremy Kyle Show USA. **3.00** ITV Nightscreen. **5.05** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R)

CHANNEL 4

6.10 The Hoobs. (R) **6.35** The Hoobs. (R) **7.00** Will & Grace. (R) **7.25** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.55** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.25** Frasier. (R) **8.55** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** How I Met Your Mother. (R) **1.00** How I Met Your Mother. (R) **1.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **2.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **2.25** The Simpsons. (R) **3.00** The Simpsons. (R) **3.30 Film:** 27 Dresses. (2008) **5.40** Deal or No Deal.

6.35 Channel 4 News.

7.00 Jamie and Jimmy's Friday Night Feast. Jamie Oliver and Jimmy Doherty present dishes for the weekend from their cafe on Southend Pier, joined by guests including athlete Usain Bolt, who prepares jerk pork. (R)

8.00 Speed with Guy Martin. The racing fan embarks on a mission to fly using muscle power alone, teaming up with engineers from Southampton University to build the fastest man-powered aircraft in the world.

9.00 Film: Fast Five. (2011) Premiere. A fugitive assembles a team of criminals for a heist in Rio, but the FBI's top manhunter is on their trail. Adventure, starring Vin Diesel.

11.35 Film: End of Days. (1999) A former police officer protects an innocent woman from the Devil, who plans to bring about Armageddon. Supernatural thriller, starring Arnold Schwarzenegger.

1.40 Southland. (R) **2.25** Coming Up: Sink or Swim. (R) **2.50** How Not to Get Old. (R) **3.45** Secret Eaters. (R) **4.40** Phil Spencer: Secret Agent. (R) **5.35** Deal or No Deal. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Peppa Pig. **6.05** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **6.15** Fifi and the Flowertots. (R) **6.25** Bubble Guppies. (R) **6.40** The Mr Men Show. (R) **6.50** Chloe's Closet. (R) **7.00** Roobarb and Custard Too. (R) **7.10** Bananas in Pyjamas. (R) **7.20** Mio Mao. (R) **7.30** Make Way for Noddy. (R) **7.40** City of Friends. (R) **7.50** Milkshake! Monkey. (R) **7.55** Little Princess. (R) **8.10** The Adventures of Bottle Top Bill and His Best Friend Corky. (R) **8.20** Angelina Ballerina. (R) **8.40** Rupert Bear. (R) **8.55** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.15** Jelly Jamm. (R) **9.30** LazyTown. (R) **10.00** Bert and Ernie's Great Adventures. (R) **10.10** Power Rangers: Super Samurai. (R) **10.45** Slugterra. (R) **11.05** Access. **11.10** Celebrity Big Brother. (R) **12.10** World's Worst Holiday Horrors. (R) **1.15 Film:** Holes. (2003) **3.30 Film:** Space Jam. (1996) **5.10** 5 News Weekend. **5.15 Film:** Loch Ness. (1996) Family drama, starring Ted Danson.

7.05 Film: My Super Ex-Girlfriend. (2006) Fantasy comedy, starring Uma Thurman and Luke Wilson.

9.00 Celebrity Big Brother. The ups and downs of BB life.

10.00 Film: The Switch. (2010) Comedy, starring Jennifer Aniston and Jason Bateman.

11.55 Hens Behaving Badly. A bride-to-be parties in Newcastle before emigrating to Australia. (R)

12.55 SuperCasino. **3.05** My Depression Diaries: Kerry Katona. (R) **4.00** Wildlife SOS. (R) **4.25** Make It Big. (R) **4.50** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **5.00** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.10** Hana's Helpline. (R) **5.20** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.25** The Funky Valley Show. (R) **5.40** Roary the Racing Car. (R) **5.50** Hana's Helpline. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three
7.00 The Voice UK **8.35 Film:** 102 Dalmatians (2000) **10.05** Family Guy **10.50** American Dad! **11.35** Bad Education

BBC Four
7.00 The Golden Age of Steam Railways **9.00** Len Goodman's Dance Band Days **10.00** Timeshift: How to Be Sherlock Holmes – The Many Faces of a Master Detective **11.00 Film:** White Elephant (2012)

ITV2
3.30 Film: Step Up (2006) **5.45 Film:** The Incredible Hulk (2008) **8.00** You've Been Framed! Top 100 Holidays **9.00** The Magaluf Weekender **10.00 Film:** The Butterfly Effect (2004)

ITV3
9.00 Being Poirot **10.00 Film:** In the Name of the Father (1993)

ITV4
1.10 Film: The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp (1943) **4.35 Film:** Horizons West (1952) **6.15 Film:** The Cimarron Kid (1952) **8.00** Dirty Britain **9.00 Film:** Absolute Power (1997) **11.30 Film:** The Enforcer (1976)

E4
4.00 Marvel's Agents of SHIELD **5.00** The Tomorrow People **6.00** The Big Bang Theory **7.00** How I Met Your Mother **8.00 Film:** Dragonball Evolution (2009) **9.40** Rude Tube **10.50** The Big Bang Theory **11.20** How I Met Your Mother

Film4
3.25 Honey, I Blew Up the Kid (1992) **5.10** The Truman Show (1998) **7.15** Post Grad (2009) **9.00** Coming to America (1988) An African prince journeys to the USA to escape an arranged marriage and search for a worthy wife. Comedy, starring Eddie Murphy and Arsenio Hall. **11.15** Sixteen Candles (1985)

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What's On!

Film Choices

MONDAY
300, ITV, 10.35pm
Leonidas, fearless king of Sparta, leads 300 of his finest warriors into battle against the vast invading armies of the ruler of the Persian empire. As the outnumbered Spartans fight for their country, his queen, Gorgo, tries to rally support for her husband at home. Fantasy action adventure based on Frank Miller and Lynn Varley's comic-book series, starring Gerard Butler, Lena Headey, Dominic West, David Wenham and Rodrigo Santoro. (2006)

TUESDAY
Disturbia, BBC1, 11.35pm
A troubled teenager is sentenced to three months under house arrest for attacking a teacher, and passes the time by spying on his neighbours. However, one day he notices something suspicious and becomes convinced one of them is a serial killer. Thriller, starring Shia LaBeouf, Carrie-Anne Moss, David Morse and Sarah Roemer. (2007)

Tropic Thunder, Wednesday, BBC1, 11.05pm

WEDNESDAY
Tropic Thunder, BBC1, 11.05pm
A director's epic Vietnam picture is behind schedule and over budget. Taking the advice of the grizzled war veteran on whose life the film is based, he drops the actors into a jungle with the intention of filming them fighting guerrilla-style – but the cast is unaware the surrounding warfare is genuine. Comedy, directed by and starring Ben Stiller, with Jack Black, Steve Coogan and, in an Oscar-nominated role, Robert Downey Jr. (2008)

THURSDAY
Avenging Angel, Channel 5, 3.20pm
A preacher dusts off his gun after outlaws murder his wife and child, destroy his church and wreak havoc in the town. Turning his back on the cloth, he heads for the desert to begin a new life as a bounty hunter, only to return to the community several years later. Finding the villains are still there and causing trouble, he decides to make them pay. Western, with Kevin Sorbo, Wings Hauser, Nick Chinlund, Cynthia Watros, Fred Cross, Jim Haynie, Richard Lee Jackson and Joey King. (2007)

FRIDAY
Saw II, Channel 4, 11.35pm
The sinister criminal Jigsaw is preparing to mete out his deranged and sadistic form of justice on more hapless victims. Meanwhile, a cop is desperately searching for the madman and the gruesome prison where he is holding eight terrified strangers. Horror sequel, starring Donnie Wahlberg, Shawnee Smith, Tobin Bell, Franky G, Glenn Plummer, Dina Meyer, Emmanuelle Vaugier and Beverley Mitchell. (2005)

Pick of the Week

Latest case is far from elementary for Holmes

Take a deep breath Sherlock fans and prepare for the end. Yes, it's the final episode of the current run, and considering the reaction to the last series' finale, it's anyone's guess how millions of fans will cope.

There's a good bet Sherlock Holmes (Benedict Cumberbatch) won't be killed off – again, but how safe is John Watson (Martin Freeman)?

Has the sleuth finally met his match as he clashes with Charles Augustus Magnussen (Lars Mikkelsen), aka the Napoleon of blackmail?

He's a man who knows the personal weakness of every person of importance in the Western world, and Holmes loathes him for his most unscrupulous line of criminal business.

As ever, Steven Moffat has penned what promises to be a cracking instalment, and while we have no clue as to whether a fourth series will see the light of day, we can but hope Moffat and co-creator Mark Gatiss work their magic with the many other Holmes tales which have yet to be given a 21st-century spin.

Martin Freeman had a great time making the new series, especially during the first read through.

"It was good – it had a kind of familiarity about it, we had new people joining which was lovely," he explains. "Given that it was our third time, or fourth including the pilot, it just feels nice and familiar. It's always exciting because the scripts are so good."

Two years after he witnessed his best friend's death, it was inevitable John Watson would take time to heal before he could move on.

"His best friend had died horribly in front of him, which took a long time to get over, but the way that his life has moved on is that he has fallen in love with Mary," explains Freeman.

(Mary is played by Martin's real-life partner Amanda Abbington in case you missed their charming appearance together on The One Show before Christmas).

"He is leading a functional, normal-ish life really which doesn't have the highs and lows of his life with Sherlock but is certainly a bit more steady. But there is a sadness with John which will always be with him when you lose someone that you love – he is slightly dulled by life."

The last series was topped and tailed by a couple of standout episodes. Some fans think A Scandal in Belgravia was the best episode to date, while others think The Reichenbach Falls takes some beating.

But what is Freeman's favourite episode?

"I have to say the ones that we have just filmed have been brilliant," he enthuses. "Before that, probably Reichenbach was my favourite one to do because when we read it I was really, really excited and I thought the finished product was amazing. It was one of the best things that I've ever done and am likely to do for a while."

With good support from Gatiss, Una Stubbs, Louise Brealey, and Rupert Graves, this should either leave you amazed, and possibly a bit miffed if it's another cliffhanger.

Benedict Cumberbatch stars in Sherlock, Sunday, BBC1, 8.30pm

Best of the Rest

MONDAY
Go Hard or Go Home
Channel 5, 8pm
It's a brand new year, and all that turkey is still sitting heavy (according to the weighing scales at least), so it's little wonder our attention is turning towards getting fit again. And if you needed any more motivation, look no further than this four-part series. It sees ordinary members of the public taking part in some of the world's most extreme endurances races, with only 12 weeks to train. This is the brainchild of Hannah White, who's sailed the Atlantic three times solo and is a competitive long-distance cyclist, mountain biker and runner. In this first episode, she's training up four doctors before they face The Bonebreaker, a 127-mile bike race that runs through the high peaks of the Pyrenees, crossing the Franco-Spanish border twice.

Dave: Loan Ranger
Channel 4, 10pm
Dave Fishwick has already shown that he's got clout when it comes to matters of money, after successfully fighting the regulators to open his own small 'depository' in the Bank of Dave series. But he's still not satisfied because since opening his bank, he's seen first-hand how the poorest in society can become saddled with unthinkable amounts of debt after borrowing money from a new breed of moneylenders – payday loan companies. So Dave's on a new mission to help these people out, and tests out a selection of high-risk loans for people who have got into payday loan problems, offering them a preferable rate of interest in an attempt to get them back on track.

TUESDAY
The Taste
Channel 4, 9pm
Just when you thought every possible culinary show format had been exhausted, along comes another one to shake the genre up a little bit. Last week, viewers saw TV cook Nigella Lawson, food maverick Anthony Bourdain and chef Ludo Lefebvre hand-pick the contestants they felt had the potential to win a battle of the taste buds – their challenge each week is to create the most flavoursome recipe they can, with help from their famous mentors. This week, Richard Corrigan also joins in the fun by setting the first task – a prawn cocktail.

Paul O'Grady's Animal Orphans
ITV, 9pm
Paul O'Grady's not afraid to admit he's a big old softie. So it's only fitting that he'd be asked to present this three-part series in which he meets animals that have been orphaned in the wild in South Africa and Zambia. Our host learns that many of these animals – lions, cheetahs, hippos, elephants, baboons, and rhinos, among others – are in fact orphaned because of humans; either because their parents have been poached and killed, or their natural habitat has been destroyed. First, Paul visits SANCCOB, a sanctuary which looks after seabirds.

Piers Morgan's Life Stories: Neil Morrissey, Friday, ITV, 9pm

WEDNESDAY
The Restoration Man
Channel 4, 8pm
One thing's for certain; George Clarke could never complain of being bored in his job. The architect gets to meet people from all walks of life for this telly gem – which would be interesting enough – and takes a nosey into their renovation plans, often rolling back his sleeves and getting in on the action himself. This week, he meets fellow architect Neil Worrell and his partner Jackie Robinson, who are making a rather big commitment. Never having lived together before, they're now going to cement their relationship by purchasing an unused church in the picturesque fishing town of Brixham in Devon.

Finding Mum and Dad
Channel 4, 10pm
When many people think about adoption, they probably imagine taking home a new baby, who will never have known any other parents. But the reality is that many of the children in most need of a family are older, and that can bring with it a new set of challenges. In this fascinating documentary, we're introduced to Connor and Daniel, who as sibling boys aged six and four are already classed as 'hard to place.' In the past, that may have suggested they were destined to spend their lives in the system, but the authorities are exploring new ways to find children the stable homes they need. Filmed over the course of 12 months, this programme goes behind the scenes of an innovative new scheme designed to find potential mums and dads.

THURSDAY
Hidden Kingdoms
BBC1, 8pm
With the new year comes a wonderful new documentary from the BBC. The list of natural history programmes over the past few years is staggering, especially considering the quality of them. Three-part series Hidden Kingdoms is the latest and reveals the survival techniques employed by some of the animal kingdom's smallest creatures. This week, we observe the grasshopper mouse of North America's Sonoran desert. Despite its stature, it is capable of disarming scorpions twice its size, and its power and athleticism allow it to avoid rattlesnakes and tarantulas.

FRIDAY
Piers Morgan's Life Stories: Neil Morrissey
ITV, 9pm
The actor most associated with his comic role as Tony in Men Behaving Badly talks openly for the first time about his infamous affair with Amanda Holden. He reflects on being taken into care when he was just 10 years old and reveals how Mel Gibson was happy for him to pretend to be his brother when they became drinking pals.

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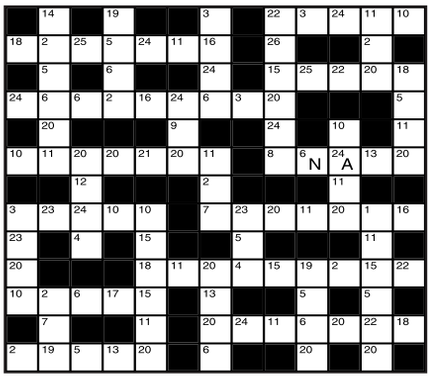
No.255

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.

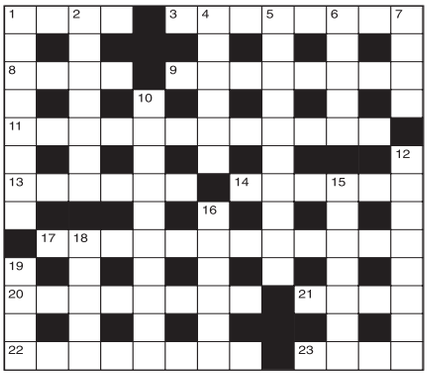


LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1 K	2 L	3 D	4 R	5 B	6 A	7 C	8 P	9 E	10 G	11 V	12 H	13 W
14 F	15 S	16 Z	17 J	18 U	19 Y	20 X	21 M	22 N	23 O	24 Q	25 I	26 T

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.



Cryptic Clues:

Across

1. Loud part of the play - and that's the truth (4)
3. Aromatic plant to sell in real variety (8)
8. Strains the affected person will give himself (4)
9. See 17 Across
11. Another stock market speculation - to control the rate of clothing? (12)
13. Three will show approval (6)
14. Provide with physical cover (6)
17 & 9 Ac. What the doctor with no respect for his patient may be doing (8,4,8)
20. Newspapers, maybe, for travelling attendants (8)
21. Box for a piece of the rigging (4)
22. Not allowing the current deposit to mount up (8)
23. Describing part of the Kalahari Desert (4)

Down

1. Those competing in it would wear running kit - jumpers would be out of place (4-4)
2. Red transport belonging to me (7)
4. Stir up a stratagem about nothing (6)
5. This study could provide a gloomy tone (10)
6. Crude monster is a fiend at heart (5)
7. Assess the charge (4)
10. Superficially covering too much betting? (10)
12. Edward takes in anaesthetic, strictly controlled in movement (8)
15. One who falls for the tourist (7)
16. The answer's a lemon! (6)
18. The way to defeat the East (5)
19. The man who is unable to get to the service would be (4)

Quick Clues:

Across

1. Small inlet of the sea (4)
3. Bias (8)
8. Eminence (4)
9. Flag (8)
11. Self-contradictory (12)
13. Awning (6)
14. Lethargy (6)
17. Impolite (12)
20. Begin (8)
21. Dam (4)
22. Lengthened (8)
23. Brink (4)

Down

1. Persuade (8)
2. Papal government (7)
4. Involve (6)
5. Make up (10)
6. Once more (5)
7. Orderly (4)
10. Examination (10)
12. Pickle (8)
15. Advance (7)
16. Elusive (6)
18. Ass (5)
19. Prevalent (4)

Sudoku

9	6					7		5
			6	1				3
3		4			5			
		3			2	5	9	7
	7			9				
5	4	9	7			3		
			9			2		6
		6		3	8			
2			4				7	9

Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

3	6	9	7	5	8	4	1	2
4	2	1	6	3	9	7	5	8
8	5	7	1	4	2	9	3	6
7	4	5	3	8	1	2	6	9
9	1	8	2	6	7	3	4	5
6	3	2	4	9	5	1	8	7
1	7	6	5	2	3	8	9	4
5	8	3	9	7	4	6	2	1
2	9	4	8	1	6	5	7	3

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS: CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Shipwrights; 9 Netball; 10 Farce; 11 Onset; 12 Siskins; 13 Mobbed; 15 Albino; 18 Trouble; 20 Oiler; 22 Okapi; 23 Stood up; 24 Penetrating. Down: 2 Hates; 3 Piastre; 4 Relish; 5 Gifts; 6 Termini; 7 Information; 8 Seismograph; 14 Brocade; 16 Look-out; 17 Teaser; 19 Bride; 21 Laden. QUICK - Across: 1 Thoughtless; 9 Dungeon; 10 Merge; 11 Lodge; 12 Settled; 13 Stress; 15 Reason; 18 Enclose; 20 Enter; 22 Crime; 23 Unusual; 24 Investments. Down: 2 Honed; 3 Useless; 4 Honest; 5 Limit; 6 Strolls; 7 Adolescence; 8 Leading role; 14 Ruction; 16 Execute; 17 Result; 19 Obese; 21 Trust.

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For further information contact Taylors on 01902 596025 or visit the dedicated website at www.taylors-estateagents.co.uk

Protect your plants from the harshness of winter

IT looks like January will be significantly colder than December. Easterly or north-easterly winds will bring chilly conditions and periods of rain, sleet and snow.

So, you'll need to keep checking slightly tender plants and make sure they are well protected from the weather.

Flower Beds & Borders

Summer-flowering bulbs, corms and tubers are one of the delights of the summer. There are so many to choose from and they come in rainbow of vibrant colours. Great examples include begonias, cannas, dahlias, eucomis and gladioli.

Hardy

Although most are not totally hardy and can't be planted outside until after the main frosts in spring, buy or order them now to ensure good stocks of your favourite varieties.

You can plant them up now in pots of good potting compost (such as Miracle-Gro Expand 'n Gro) and grow them on frost free under cover for planting outside later.

Doing this will provide an earlier display than planting out after the frosts.

Towards the end of the month you can start sowing seeds of annuals that need a long growing season - such as antirrhinum, geranium (pelargonium), lobelia, salvia and bedding begonias.

But resist sowing unless you have the warmth to grow the plants on (a minimum of 10C/50F in a brightly lit place) and the facilities to harden them off properly before planting out.

Sowing too soon in the wrong conditions can lead to straggly, unhealthy plants that never perform well in the garden. Leaving sowing until the conditions are better usually results in better plants and these soon catch up and out-perform those sown too early.

Before sowing any plants make sure that the compost has been warmed to room temperature; cold compost will prevent seed germination and lead to rotting.

Keeping plants protected from the cold and frost is very important

Topical tip: ***Sweet peas can be sown indoors this month, preferably in a heated propagator. You'll get better results if you use long pots, Rootrainers or tubes, rather than standard pots.***

Motoring

Compiled by Motoring Editor Sharon Walters

A workhorse not a 4x4 posing Chelsea tractor

Drive time with Graham Breeze

IF YOU are one of those looking to pose outside the school gate in a gleaming 4X4 the Land Rover Defender is not for you.

Because the defender is no show pony. In fact it's quite the opposite – the finest 4x4 workhorse you are likely to encounter.

There's very little finery about this model. In fact apart from a few cosmetic makeovers the Defender is just as it was decades ago when I cut my teeth as a budding driver on the farm tracks and fields near my home.

And that's been the strength of this British icon so I have to question why Land Rover are trying to strengthen its appeal with gimmicks such as seat design and sound systems.

The defender was born to be a workhorse and while I can understand the desire to personalise your vehicle with the contrasting roof colours that are now available I see no need for anything else.

Customers seeking a higher level of specification can now enhance their vehicle with three additional options and a choice of two new exterior body colours, Barolo Black and Havana.

Smart new, contrast roof colours can now be chosen against the majority of the Defender paint palette. In addition to the standard Fuji White, customers can now opt for Santorini Black, Indus Silver, Orkney Grey or Firenze Red.

If you want to impress at the school gates this is not for you

The Defender will easily cross a desert or climb a mountain

Land Rover has tweaked the dash

The Firenze Red can be chosen with the Santorini Black roof and the Baltic Blue with Indus Silver or simply retain their body colour.

Premium part leather seats which contour your body are available to the driver and front seat passenger, sporting the Land Rover logo on the backrest. But it's the EU5 2.2-litre diesel engine, which replaced the EU4 2.4-litre diesel in 2012, matching it for power, torque and fuel consumption that really counts when it comes to performance.

The engine produces 122PS@3,500rpm and torque of 360Nm@2,000rpm, giving a 0-60mph time of 14.7 seconds and a top speed of 90mph. CO2 emissions on the combined cycle are 266g/km. The GFT MT 82 six-speed gearbox has an excellent ratio spread, high top gear for cruising and enhanced low-speed crawl capability. The lower first gear offers low crawl speed making towing on-road and off-road much easier. The low-down engine torque also helps in-gear acceleration and the tall sixth gear ensures excellent real-world cruising, refinement and fuel economy. Land Rover has tweaked the dash and improved seating over the years but you could never describe the Defender as comfortable. It's an extremely hard drive, you still need "Popeye" size muscles when parking while front seats seem too close to the doors leaving little space for the driver's right arm yet there is a vast space between driver and passenger.

If you want to cross a desert, climb a mountain or negotiate difficult farmland the Defender is for you. If you want to pose and impress at the wheel of a 4X4 look elsewhere.

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Models Shown: Jazz 1.2 i-VTEC S Manual in Milano Red Non-Metallic, Civic 1.4 i-VTEC S Manual in Milano Red Non-Metallic and CR-V 2.0 i-VTEC S Manual 2WD in optional Passion Red Pearl. **Terms and Conditions:** Nil Advanced Payment offer on Jazz 1.2 i-VTEC S Manual and Civic 1.4 i-VTEC S Manual, £999 Advanced Payment offer on CR-V 2.0 i-VTEC S Manual 2WD. All offers are correct at the time of going to print however Honda (UK) reserves the right to change this offer at any time. Models subject to availability. Written details available on request. The facilities offered are for the hire of goods. The scheme is available to recipients of the Higher Rate Mobility Component of the Disability Living Allowance or War Pensioners Mobility Supplement. To qualify for this offer you must be in receipt of a minimum of 12 months allowance. Valid for applications between 1 January 2014 to 31 March 2014 to Motability Operations Limited (Registered Company No. 1373876), City Gate House, 22 Southwark Bridge Road, London SE1 9HB. Promoter is Honda Motor Europe Limited trading as Honda (UK) at 470 London Road, Slough, Berkshire SL3 8QY. (Registered Company No. 1373876), City Gate House, 22 Southwark Bridge Road, London SE1 9HB. Promoter is Honda Motor Europe Limited trading as Honda (UK) at 470 London Road, Slough, Berkshire SL3 8QY

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Prices are confirmed for all-electric city car

VOLKSWAGEN has confirmed UK pricing for the all-electric e-Up city car, with deliveries expected by the end of January 2014.

After accounting for the £5,000 government grant towards plug-in electric vehicles, the e-Up will cost from £19,250 on the road, which is more than double the price tag of a mid-range petrol-powered Up. The car, which is capable of 81mph thanks to an 81bhp electric motor, can theoretically achieve more than 90 miles on a single charge, although owners are more likely to get around 70 with careful use.

Its performance exceeds that of the petrol Up, though, with a 0-62mph time of 12.4 seconds and, crucially, a 0-30mph time of around four seconds.

A DC fast-charging circuit will be supplied as standard, enabling the e-Up to charge from flat to 80 per cent in 30 minutes, but a conventional three-pin wall charger will also be offered as an option.

The e-Up's extra equipment includes a heated windscreen, DAB digital radio with six-speaker Sound Pack, City Emergency Braking system, rear parking sensors and an electronic climate control system.

The Volkswagen e-Up city car. With an on-the-road price of £19,250, it is capable of 81mph

The Skoda Octavia vRS has been voted 'Best Everyday Car of the Year' by lifestyle magazine FHM

Octavia vRS scoops award

THE Skoda Octavia vRS has been awarded the 'Best Everyday Car of the Year' gong by a leading men's lifestyle magazine.

Judges on FHM's panel were impressed by the hot Octavia's interior space, family-friendly practicality, impressive performance and striking style. Its price also struck a chord, with an entry figure of £22,990 on the road, putting it well below less spacious alternatives.

Chris Horrell, product marketing manager for Skoda UK said: "We are thrilled that the Octavia vRS hatch has been honoured in the FHM Car Awards.

"The sporty model offers the perfect solution for style-conscious drivers who require superior power delivery as well as all-round everyday practicality."

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EcoSport is another first rate car from Ford stable

Ford's EcoSport may have a 'compact' tag but it is surprisingly spacious

There are bash-proof plastics in the cabin but there's a touch of good standard

IF you've been looking for a mini SUV recently you may have noticed the absence of Ford representation in what's become a rapidly growing market sector.

The Blue Oval has finally fixed this omission with the EcoSport, a car boasting familiar Ford driving and design characteristics plus a trio of engines promising to be kind on your wallet.

As befits a market sector focused more on urban agility than the ability to climb every mountain, the EcoSport is front-wheel drive only.

Up front you've the choice of Ford's awarding winning three-cylinder, 1.0-litre EcoBoost petrol motor, a conventional 1.5-litre petrol and frugal 1.5-litre, four-pot diesel unit.

Riding more than a little higher than a Fiesta, the EcoSport offers drivers a commanding view of the road. Despite its 'compact' tag, Ford's mini SUV's cabin is surprisingly spacious, and there's enough room for four adults, or more importantly a growing family.

Bash-proof plastics abound in the cabin, which, while coming close to that of a Fiesta or Focus, are the obvious sign of the EcoSport's low-cost roots.

Still, what you can see and touch is of a good standard, and the controls and displays will be familiar to existing Ford owners.

Also pleasing is Ford's generosity when it comes to standard equipment.

Titanium

Focusing initially on high-grade Titanium spec, the EcoSport lacks very little in real terms thanks to the inclusion of keyless ignition, alloy wheels, air-con, decent audio and plush upholstery.

Open your wallet a little wider and you can add leather trim, rain sensing wipers, cruise control and Ford's feature rich multimedia system complete with mobile phone connectivity.

Showroom appeal is all very well, fortunately the EcoSport also makes a convincing case on the road.

While not built for outright speed the car boasts a well sorted ride and weighty steering, which should instil plenty of confidence when on the move.

Much work has been done by Ford's engineers to tailor the EcoSport to the demands of European roads and its drivers.

The bottom line is that a mini SUV drives much like any current small Ford, which is a considerable achievement and should be enough to give its rivals something to think about.

It's fair to say that, in 1.0-litre EcoBoost trim, the car is best suited to relaxed urban motoring. Brisk performance is easily achievable but push hard and you'll soon be jealous of the extra torque and smoothness of the diesel motor.

The EcoBoost petrol-powered car might be quicker in a straight line but the diesel's welcome extra slug of torque might be a deal-breaker for some.

The five-speed manual gearshift is slick in both cars, while the added flexibility of the diesel allows you to stretch the EcoSport's legs on long journeys.

Motorway cruising is a doddle plus you'll need fewer downchanges when attacking hilly terrain.

Other cars might have stolen a march in this market sector but Ford's EcoSport can stand tall, confident it has the requisite talents to meet many of its rivals head on.

It might not have been first to market but it's yet another first-rate motor from Ford.

This mini SUV drives like any small Ford

Bumper to bumper

Ford EcoSport 1.0 EcoBoost Titanium, from £15,995 on the road.

Engine: 1.0-litre petrol unit developing 125bhp.
Transmission: Five-speed manual transmission as standard, driving the front wheels.
Performance: Maximum speed 112mph, 0-62mph 12.7 seconds.
Economy: 53.3mpg.
CO2 Rating: 125g/km.

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A ALL YEAR DISCOUNT! White Rolls Cloud, Shadow & Vintage with free hire of Jaguar. 01384 236188 / 01902 887628 www.elite-wedding-services.magix.net

function rooms

FREE FUNCTION ROOM Weddings, anniversaries, birthdays. Powerleague 01384 266000 halesowen@powerleague.co.uk

FreeAds
IT'S FREE, IT'S EASY
For items upto £250.
Online at
www.expressandstar.com/bookanad

what's on

taxi's

CROWN TAXIS 24 Hours. Friendly service. All areas covered. 01384 868686 01384 484484.

World of Mobility
NEW Electric Scooters
from only £695
Second hand from £300
Manual Wheelchairs from £110
Electric Rise & Recline Chairs from £495
STAIRLIFTS/ ELECTRIC BEDS
Showroom 108C Brettell Lane, Amblecote Stourbridge DY8 4BS or call 01384 378252
OPEN MON-SAT 9-5 pm FREE PARKING AT REAR

markets

The Famous **BILSTON SUNDAY MARKET & CAR BOOT**
52 WEEKS A YEAR, WHATEVER THE WEATHER!
OVER 150 SHELTERED STALLS
£15 for 1 / £20 for 2 /£25 for 3
NO MUD! FREE PARKING!
VOTED THE MIDLANDS BEST!
SELLERS TURN UP - £10 PER BOOT
BILSTON TOWN CENTRE, WV14 0DN
"IF ITS LEGAL, IT CAN BE SOLD HERE!"
CALL DAVE 07907 332068
www.bsdpromotions.com

3 Home & Services

furniture

The BIG SALE
Dreams See our main ad

WINTER SALE UPTO 70% OFF
New Factory Outlet
Worcester extra value divan single was £99 NOW £49.50. Doubles £89.50. Cleo Sofa Bed clic clac in fabric or faux leather was £398 NOW £119 Melissa Cabin Bed, with base cupboards and drawers, blue or pink, quality mattress, was £380 NOW £195, complete divans from £49, ortho matts from £69, memory foam matts £89, metal fashion beds frames £39, ottoman and leather sleigh beds, over 1000 mattresses, wing chairs £119, recliner chairs £199, massage and power recliners from £299, complete suites from £299. **Save 50% on all leather corner units-normally £499 half price £249.** 3 seater wexford fabric sofas-normally £399 clearance £149. Chairs £49. Recliners leather £199. Beds from £49. Mattresses from just £29. Bunk beds £99.
OPEN 7 DAYS. SUNDAY 10AM-4PM
BFC, Unit 9, Coneygre Rd, Burnt Tree, Dudley DY4 8XP A461
over road from new Tesco, 100 mtrs past Toby.
0121 557 6885

RED LEATHER SOFA three seater and swivel chair, modern design, good condition, £170 ono. Telephone 07825 665347.

THREE PIECE SUITE
Dralon, recently re-covered, reversable cushions, mulberry / cream pattern, solid suite, very good condition.
£300 ono.
Buyer to collect.

CASUAL TABLE
Light oak, 2ft 6 x 1ft 6 x 2ft 2, suitable for hall, lounge and bedroom.
£40.
01785 822588.

household appliances

CANON TRADITIONAL 60 FREE STANDING COOKER Double electric oven, with ceramic hob, cream, fully programmable, insured until May 2014. Cost £750. Sell £295. Telephone 07585 705200.

FRIDGE FREEZER in excellent condition £90. Can deliver. 07765 106519.

in your garden

Top Soil, Building Sand
Paving/Concrete Sand
Decorative Gravels
Delivered Bagged or Loose
01902 893226

items for sale

HAVE YOU CHECKED your advertisement today? We would respectfully remind advertisers that it is their responsibility to inform the publishers of any mistakes or inaccuracies on the first day of publication.

CORRUGATED Roofing Sheets Also tile effect/box profile/curved and z purlins. Call Hornsey Steels 01547 530419

items wanted

A ABSOLUTELY BEST price given for single items or houses cleared. Antique, old, reproduction. Call: 01384 482155 or 07802 475693.

A BEST CASH PRICE PAID

ALL TOYS CARS/LORRIES WANTED. ALL Mamod/Wilesco/Bowmans
All conditions
Dinky *Corgi* *Spot-on*
Britains and Airfix
Mamod / Wilesco Steam Engines
Scalextric Pre 1970's Tri-ang, cars or complete sets.
Old Enamel Advertising Signs
Pre 1970 Annuals wanted, Beano, Dandy, etc
01902 745598 / 07984 159571

ALL BOXED / LOOSE RAILWAY COLLECTIONS WANTED ANY GAUGE OR AGE
Also live steam, also Diecast, Dinky, Corgi, Spot On. Guaranteed top cash prices paid!!
0121 602 2569/07891 713547. thetrainmaster67@hotmail.com

ALL GOLD 9ct £300 per ounce
CASH PAID TODAY
A GENUINE LADY BUYER
All Beswick • Doulton • Worcester
Moorcroft •Lladro • Old coins
• Watches • Costume Jewellery • Old toys
• Clocks • Paintings • All silver
• Chinese items • Old Ivory.
• Military items
Pre'47 silver coins All war medals etc
ANYTHING OLD & INTERESTING
01922 495066 or 07971 783206

TRAILER WANTED. Galvanised, factory made, any size. 07752 805267.

WANTEDSmall mannequin or sewing busk. 01384 221546.

pc's, laptops & accessories

ComputerService
FOR ALL YOUR COMPUTER NEEDS
(01384) 392571
www.computerserviceltd.co.uk

LAPTOP Computer, windows, wireless, office, good condition, can deliver and show working £65. 07973 348534.

t.v. / home entertainment

sales

SONY 40INS TV (LCD) DVD/video, surround amplifier/speakers, mini DV camcorder, tomtom, satnav. £250 will seperate. 01902 880274.

service

AERIAL & TV SPECIALISTS
Free call out & estimates on any TV Plasma, LCD, Projection repairs.
All areas covered 8 till late. 7 days.
Digital aerials, Sky installation.
Wall mounts & TV setups.
07850 330251

specialists at your service

aerials

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1 aerial into 2 rooms
£85
1 aerial into 4 rooms
£125
All work guaranteed
SAME DAY SERVICE
01902 858191
01384 429166
01543 439095
01922 716029
07833 738857

alarms/security

PREMIER ALARMS
Supplied and Fitted £195
Servicing and Repairs
12 Months Warranty
All areas covered
All quotes beaten!
Call: 0121 601 9791

appliance repairs

Home Appliance Repair & Parts
Washing machine faulty?
Cooker faulty?
All Brands - All Appliances Repaired
FREE CALL OUT 07764 478534 or 01384 373096

building services

ALL TYPES OF BUILDING & roofing work by Davies & Son. No job too small. See us on 'Rated People'. Call 01902 579592 / 07837 994465

carpet & upholstery cleaning

A CLASS CARPET & UPHOLSTERY CLEANING
Carpets dry in 30 minutes.
Call Paul: 0800 112 3959
www.aclasscarpetcleaning.co.uk

cooker fitters

ALL COOKERS FITTED by Bows Universal Domestic Installs. Call 0800 756 2632 or 07973 534527.

double glazing

UPVC BACK DOORS from £299, front doors from £349 fitted, Windows & Fascia's, 01922 442720.

electrical services

STEVE JONES ELECTRICAL Rewires/sockets/fuse boards etc. All domestic and commercial work. 07786 858977/01902 846167.

gardening services

For all your Patio's, Turfing, Decking, treework and Root grinding...
Prestwood FENCING & LANDSCAPING
Call us on: 01384 273586 or 07947 879403 or visit www.prestwoodfencing.co.uk for more details

JEZ'S GARDEN SERVICES
Lawns cut, Borders, Garden clearances
Trees lobbed and shaped
Fencing, Slabbing...
Please call: 01384 403353 or 07929 600636

gas fitting

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• Boilers
• Cookers
• Fires
• Gas Checks
• Landlord Certificates
• Gas Leaks Traced
Fitted, Serviced and Repaired
Same Day Service
Free Quotes
DISCOUNTS FOR OAPs
Call: 01902 366855/ 07761 973975

home improvements

JVC Building Services
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www.jvcbuilders.co.uk
07570 807436/ 01384 671501

house clearances

Your Local British Heart Foundation Furniture And Electrical Store
Offers a sympathetic and professional House Clearance service.
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Fight for Every Heartbeat.

Do you need to clear your home?
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www.marystevenshospice.co.uk

A ABSOLUTE BEST cash price paid for house clearances and bereavements. Tel: 07852 172641.

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Reliable & Friendly, Professional
Female Painter and Decorator
Quality work with competitive prices.
For the Perfect Finish with minimum hassle.
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01384 287577 or 07812 484194

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plans prepared

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plastering

P.D.P PLASTERING & TILING
All aspects of plastering & Tiling. City & Guilds NVQ.
Call Pete: 07505662778
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All general plumbing work undertaken, No job too small!
Reliable and experienced plumber, free quotes
Call Dave
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Plumbing, Heating, Gaswork.
Gas Safe Registered.
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WE BUY ANY BOILER We buy any boiler Vist: www.webuyanyboiler.net

property maintenance

DG PROPERTY MAINTENANCE & REPAIRS
Decorating, Gardening, Woodwork, Locks, Windows and Doors Fitted & Replaced. Gas Safe.
07814 379166 or 01384 839366

removals

ABLE REMOVALS
Local House Clearances
Domestic & Commercial
Competitive Prices
Call 07870 341089

A1 KINGSWINFORD REMOVALS & HOUSE CLEARANCES
Single items,
Full houses, Offices etc
Recession rates,
FREE QUOTES
We take the stress away
40 years experience
07966 281957

CHEAPER REMOVALS
NATIONWIDE, INSURED, FREE QUOTES
Single Items to Full Removals.
01902 894916 / 07807 773035

A & M CHEAP REMOVALS
Local
Careful Firm
Full or Part loads
Call Don:
0800 587 0377
or 07749 941319

A MAN WITH A VAN Single items, flat/house removals/clearances, local/nationwide. Call Steve 0121 422 2999 or 07815 043724

CALL DEAN! Business/Domestic, Deliveries/Relocation/full house 1 item.07429 453209/01902 830870

CALL PETE - MAN WITH A VAN, Removals, clearances. Items large or small. Call: 01902 741546, 07917 679360 or 01384 468955.

KINGSWINFORD REMOVALS recession rates-beat any quotes, fully experienced. 07966 281957.

SAVE ON A SKIP LOAD Clearances, removals, men & van hire, OAP discounts, no permits. 01384 823492/ 07772315165.

roofing

ROOFIX ROOFING
Flat Roofing Specialists
Tiling work, fascias, soffits, guttering, chimney repointing. Free quotes.
01902 560892, 07952 442017

MG ROOFING
Flat roofs, tiling, roof repairs, fascias and gutters.
01902 238989 or 07580 465449

PREMIER ROOFING New Roofs, Repairs, Facias & Gutters. Call: 0121 532 7601or 07875 387445.

skip hire

MT SKIPS
All sizes
All areas covered
Immediate delivery
Competitive prices
Fast and Reliable service
Call:01384 240956
07920 885774

BIG JOHN MOVES RUBBISH! No Skips, we load, fast friendly service, 25 Lister Rd, Dudley DY2 8JR, Est 30 years, 01384 232359.

4 Pets & Animals

equestrian corner

ALL READERS are advised to check if Horses have the required Passport information.

guns & dogs

NOTICE TO ADVERTISERS
Advertisers must ensure that they meet all necessary legal requirements for owning and using guns.

AIR ARMS S410
Gas powered, 10 shot .177, with carry case and silencer. Also Deben scope, which cost £550, might separate.
Will accept £480 for both.
Telephone 07789 053575.

vets

Express & Star

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pets corner

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• Pet supplies • Dog grooming • Dog training
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Tel: 01384 364080
www.companionspets.co.uk

NOTICE TO READERS
Please be aware that when purchasing a puppy there are some simple guidelines you can follow to ensure that you are not purchasing from a Puppy Farmer:
1. Try to ensure you visit the puppy whilst it is still with it's Mother.
2. Do not arrange to collect a puppy from any other location than that of the breeder.
3. Ensure that you are given any KC documentation, if pedigree.
Whilst Midland News Association publications take great care to avoid publication of advertisements from Puppy Farmers we cannot accept any liability should readers purchase from this kind of establishment.

BEADLE PUPPIES first vacc and health checked, £300. 07972 604503.

BEAGLE PUPPIES terrific temperament, ideal family pet. Parents can be seen, £450. 07899 993998.

KING CHARLES Cavaliers, first vacc and health checked, £350. 07972 604503.

SIBERIAN HUSKY, 18 months old must go to a loving home only £300 07891 835098 / 01902 563320.

KIND HOMES WANTED
JASMINE Lovely gentle 9 yr old liver and white springer spaniel
SPOTTY 8yr old pretty tri colour small collie girl
MEG 3year old Collie Cross, lovely, affectionate
KIM Collie cross 4year old lovely family pet
CHARLIE 7 year old Yorkshire Terrier
POPPY 4 year old Yorkshire Terrier
SOPHIE 5 yr old female small staffie, friendly, affectionate and lovely
01588 676106 or visit website
www.dogsamaritans.org.uk

STAFFORDSHIRE BULL Terrier pup, 5 months old, full Pedigree, vaccinated, ill health forces sale, £200.
07864 884874 or 0121 5201882.

WANTED. Aviary birds for large private aviary. Also pigeons and poultry for beginner and parrot for house pet. 07970 485491.

5 Business & Farming

auctions

ACCOUNTS, BOOK KEEPING, PAYROLL, VAT New start-ups welcome. Phone Clover on: 01384 459714 or 07715 510749.

business opportunities

READERS are recommended to take appropriate professional advice before entering any obligations.

commercial premises sale / let

PROPERTIES TO LET
Stourbridge Area
Flats *from £375pcm*
Commercial Units *from £375pcm*
Shops *from £350pcm*
07946 410983
www.christopher-collins.co.uk

6 Property

accommodation to let

A 1-BEDROOM over 50's flat, Chapel Ash, W'ton, £350 pcm. Wednesfield H.A. 01952 463603.

A STUDIO FLAT Coalway Road, W'ton, £280pcm. Wednesfield H.A. 01952 463603.

NOTICE TO READERS It is an offence under the Accommodation Agencies Act 1953, for an Agency to charge a fee simply for the registration of your requirements and/or supplying particulars of premises to let.

COSELEY comfortable s/c flat, 1 bed, unfurnished, ideal 30+, £330 pcm. 01902 758934.

FLAT TO Rent Bilston, with private parking with disabled access. £375 pcm. 07966 527807.

THREE BED House, Fellow St, W-ton, WV2 4ND, (opposite park) £500pcm ono. 07779 974453.

THREE BED Semi Bloxwich. £125pw parking, dg, GCH, garden, alarm, n/s or pets. 07830 038188.

WEDNESFIELD AREA 2/3 bed dormer bungalow with garage, full CH, large garden within walking distance to all amenties. 01902 845817 / 07813 063399.

WEDNESFIELD Speedwell Close, 2 bed house, parking, garage, £525pcm. 07800 876199.

accommodation wanted

TWO BED BUNGALOW WITH GARAGE
GCH on long term let, unfurnished, near Wombourne, Swindon, Himley or any surrounding quiet area.
Must be by Public transport required by 2 respectable mature males, one with a disability.
Must accept HB.
Willing to pay upto £475pcm.
07510 348797.

properties wanted

I BUY HOUSES!
Local investor pays 10k more.
Call Alex 07729 297901

We Buy Any House

We Pay 100% of Purchase Price

EVERY TIME

BCH BLACK COUNTRY HOMES

- We are a family run local business.
- A fair offer from people you can trust.
- No fees - Free solicitors

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or 0800 032 1718

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* Terms apply
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• ANY AREA • ANY CONDITION
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mobile homes

MOBILE HOME
Two bedrooms, excellent throughout, good sized garden, private parking, residential site at Hinksford near Kingswinford.
£99,500.
01384 400631/07896 325163.

houses for sale

STOWHEATH
2 bed end terrace, garage, driveway, DG, new CH, gas fire, wood floors, fitted wardrobe, large garden, recently renovated.
Room to extend.
£97,500.
07930 310761.

WROCKWARDINE WOOD TELFORD
Bungalow occupying idyllic spot with rear Woodlands and stunning Wrekin views. Partial DG, electric heating, double bedroom, new kitchen, new bathroom, lounge, verandah. Front and rear gardens with shrubs, rose bushes and tree lined rear aspect. Parking. No upward chain. Potential to extend subject to planning.
£89,999.
Telephone 07748 527049

overseas property

NOTICE TO READERS
Readers are advised to seek independent legal advice before entering into any financial commitments.

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For items upto £250.
Online at
www.expressandstar.com/bookanad

7 Jobs

employment wanted

TWENTY YEAR old male seeks employment as electricians mate. 17th Edition, Asbestos Awareness and ECS. 07596 136510.

courses

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Learn how to collect blood samples

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TELFORD 26-27 MAR
TAMWORTH 10-11 FEB 24-25 APRIL
DROITWICH 8-9 FEB

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CAR & TRAILER (B+E)
MINIBUS (D1)
1-2-1 TRAINING
INITIAL CPC TRAINING & ADR
CPC Periodic Training for PCV & LGV from 7hr blocks - Full 35hrs
01902 744726 / 07831 646601

motor trade

EXPERIENCED CAR PAINTS SPRAYER required for family owned accident repair centre. Rates negotiable. Tel 01384 396418 or 07989 964348

PROFESSIONAL CAR VALETER must be able to nib and polish for family owned accident repair centre. Rates negotiable. Tel 01384 396418 or 07989 964348

part time - general

NEED AN EXTRA INCOME £200-£2,000pm - 0121 314 9652. www.bericher.info

WOLVERLEY SURGERY - TRAINEE DISPENSARY ASSISTANT This 16 hour a week post would suit someone who is keen to enter a career in Dispensing. Participation and completion of the Dispensing Assistant Course (Level 2 equivalent) is a requirement and will be funded by the Surgery. Please visit our website www.wolverleysurgery.co.uk . Job Vacancies for application form. Closing date 24 January 2014

ADVERTISEMENTS
CONDITIONS OF ACCEPTANCE

1. **Midland News Association Limited** All publications in this group are published by the Midland News Association Limited, registered office Queen Street, Wolverhampton WV1 1ES ('the Company') and this is the address to which any notices should be sent.
2. **Acceptance** The Company will only accept advertising on these standard terms and no other contract terms or conditions will apply other than those which are implied by statute and cannot lawfully be excluded. In particular the Company will not accept advertising on the basis of advertiser's terms and conditions.
3. **Content of Advertisements** All advertisements must be legal decent honest and truthful. Advertisements must comply with the British Code of Advertising Practice and all other codes under the general supervision of the Advertising Standards Authority. Advertisements must comply with the requirements of all current legislation including but not limited to the following:- All advertisements must clearly differentiate between trade and private advertising as required by the Business Advertisements (Disclosure) Order 1977. Advertisements offering credit or hire facilities must comply with the Consumer Credit (Advertisement) Regulations 1980.
All descriptions of goods must be accurate and in no way infringe the provisions of the Trades Descriptions Act 1968.
Advertisements must not contain any material which is defamatory. You must have permission to use any material contained in your advertisement and must not infringe the copyright moral rights or any other right of any third party.
The Company reserves the right to refuse to carry any advertisement or to require amendment of any advertisement in its absolute discretion.
4. **Appearance of Advertisements** Whilst the Company makes every effort to comply with requests, publication on a particular date or in a particular position cannot be guaranteed. The Company reserves the right to alter, suspend, cancel or reject an advertisement at its discretion even after the same has been accepted for publication without being liable to compensate you. You will not be charged for any advertisement which does not appear. If only a part of a series of advertisements appears you will only be charged for the advertisements in the series which actually appear. The Company does not guarantee the publication or extent of supporting editorial and your obligation to pay for advertising will not under any circumstances be dependent upon the appearance or content of editorial. No liability will be accepted for non-appearance of editorial. The Company does not guarantee that advertising will not appear for similar or the same subject matter to your advertisement and no liability shall be accepted as a result of such advertising appearing. It is the advertiser's responsibility to provide any amended copy, whether by electronic or other format, and the Company does not guarantee that it will be able to or will agree to modify, amend or alter any file or copy supplied to it.
5. **Liability The Company's** liability for any loss or damage caused by any error or omission in the advertisement or any other breach of contract shall not in any circumstances exceed a full refund of any price paid by the advertiser to the Company for the publication of the advertisement or the cost of a further or corrective advertisement of the same type as that which originally appeared. Where a series of advertisements is booked the Company's liability shall not in any circumstances exceed the value of the first advertisement in the series. In the event of any error, misprint or omission in the publication of the advertisement the Company will either re-publish the advertisement or the relevant parts of the advertisement or make a reasonable refund of or adjustment to the cost of the advertisement. If the error does not materially detract from the advertisement then no re-publication, refund or adjustment will be made. It is the advertiser's responsibility to check the content of advertisements and the Company will not accept any liability for loss or damage, or obligation to republish or make a refund or adjustment, arising from re-publication of an advertisement containing an error, misprint or omission which has not been identified by the advertiser after first publication.
6. **Box numbers The Company** accepts no liability for loss or damage caused by delay in forwarding or omission to forward to the advertiser replies to Box Numbers. Box Numbers must not be used for sending goods, distributing circulars or communications from agents. The Company reserves the right to open and inspect all replies to Box Number and to destroy goods, circulars of communications from agents which are discovered during an inspection.
7. **Inspection The Company** shall be entitled at any time to inspect any goods or services advertised and may decline to carry further advertising if such inspection is not permitted or if in the Company's opinion the provision of further advertising facilities is not appropriate in view of the nature or quality of the goods or services.
8. **Indemnity** The advertiser, including any advertising agency involved in placing any advertisement, warrants that it has permission to use for publication by electronic and printed means all material which is included in the advertisement. The advertiser and any advertising agency involved in placing any advertisement agree to indemnity the Company in respect of all charges, costs, claims or damage arising out of the publication of the advertisement, whether the same result from actual or threatened legal action or from some other cause.
9. **Cancellation** On a request for cancellation or amendment of a classified advertisement being accepted, you will be given a cancellation or amendment number which must be quoted in all subsequent correspondence. Payment of the originally agreed price will be required in full for any advertisement in relation to which the advertiser is unable to supply a valid cancellation or amendment number. Cancellation can only be accepted if the Company is notified of the cancellation by no later than the following deadlines:-
Lineage, Semi Display - By no later than 6.30pm on the working day prior to publication. Advertisements to appear on Monday must be cancelled by 10 am on the preceding Saturday
Classified Display - By no later than 24 hours before the date of publication
Colour/Features - By no later than 10 clear days before the date of publication
To cancel Lineage, Semi Display and Classified Display advertisements please telephone 01902 317878. To cancel Colour/Features advertisements please speak to the Representative through whom the advertisement was booked.
10. **Rates** Advertising rates are as laid out in the Company's current rate card which is available on request from the Company's offices. The rates may be varied from time to time in the Company's absolute discretion and without prior notification of the intended variation. The revised rate will be charged for any advertising ordered after the date of variation.
All gross advertising rates except classified lineage and semi-display are subject to a 0.1% Advertising Standards Board of Finance levy payable by advertisers to help finance the self-regulatory system administered by the Advertising Standards Authority.
11. **Payment** The Company reserves the right to require pre-payment as a condition of any advertisement being published. Where pre-payment is not required unless different credit terms have been agreed with the advertiser in writing payment must be made within 14 days of the date of issue of the Company's invoice. An additional £2.00 booking charge will be payable if the invoice is not paid in full within this 14 day period.
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Seconds start New Year with hard battle

Bromsgrove 2nds 10
Old Halesonians 2nds 18

OLD Halesonians Seconds started 2014 with a hard fought win over local rivals Bromsgrove 2nds.

Bromsgrove were fired up for this encounter and dominated possession for much of the first half.

Old Hales defended manfully to keep the home side from crossing their try line, but finally the referee adjudged that an Old Hales infringement at a Bromsgrove attacking scrum prevented a certain try and awarded Bromsgrove a penalty try.

The straight forward conversion gave the home side a 7-0 lead.

Bromsgrove continued to attack in the Old Hales half and following the award of a penalty, the home side took the opportunity to add another three points to take a lead into half time.

The Old Hales half time team talk seemed to do the trick and they started the second half with more purpose and direction.

The visitors gained a greater amount of possession and regularly attacked the Bromsgrove defence. From one such attack, the ball was moved quickly to the right and speedster Jack Manners showed a clean pair of heels as he outpaced the Bromsgrove defence to score.

The visitors could now smell the scent of victory and continued to attack.

From a Bromsgrove lineout close to their own line, Old Hales pressure paid off as the ball fell loose over the line and second row Tom Lewis reacted quickly and pounced for a try.

The conversion was unsuccessful leaving the score level.

The Old Hales pressure took its toll on the Bromsgrove No.10 who was shown a yellow card following an infringement and back chat to the referee.

The referee marched the Bromsgrove defence back 20 metres and Sam Vaughan slotted the penalty over for a 13-10 lead.

With less than 10 minutes to go to full time Old Hales put together a superb passage of play from a scrum. Great interplay by several players ended with Alex Church going over for the final try of the game.

Old Hales dogged determination contributed to this deserved victory over a strong Bromsgrove side.

Hackett's men have to share the spoils

St Neots Town 1 Stourbridge 1

Football

GARY HACKETT'S men were forced to settle for a share of the spoils as the Cambridgeshire hosts rallied late on.

Despite being a man light St Neots cancelled out Sean Geddes' successfully converted 28th minute spot-kick with an equalising goal from Jay Davies with seven minutes remaining.

Neither side was able to get a firm grip on the game for much of the afternoon.

In the fifth minute a kick downfield by home keeper Nathan Abbey bounced through to Shane Tolley on the right and he cut inside before dragging his low shot wide.

The Glassboys then had a chance on 19 minutes when a deep left-wing cross from Luke Benbow led to a weak header by Arthur Lee dropping invitingly towards Ben Billingham, however he screwed his left-foot volley well off-target. Stourbridge though broke the deadlock after 28 minutes.

Sean Geddes exchanged passes with Benbow and then hit a rising 25-yard shot that Abbey parried above his head and Ryan Rowe reacted quickest as Abbey tried to retrieve the ball and was caught and upended by the home custodian to earn the visitors a penalty that Geddes drove home.

Stourbridge began to look more dangerous as the half wore on.

A minute before the break Billingham saw a low 20-yard shot safely held by Abbey. After the interval, Billingham curled a 20-yard free-kick over the bar on 58 minutes before the hosts went close six minutes later as sub Lewis Hilliard got on the end of a pulled-back cross from the left, but his downwards header on goal was cleared by the covering Nathan Bennett. Stourbridge responded in the 66th minute with Geddes working a one-two with Kayelden Brown before hitting a shot from just outside the left-hand corner of the box that took a deflection and forced Abbey into a flying save away to his left. With 18 minutes remaining St Neots were reduced to 10 men when Lorenzo Ferrari picked up his second caution of the afternoon for a foul on Billingham.

However, the dismissal served only to galvanise the hosts who enjoyed their best spell of the game as Stourbridge increasingly sat back.

In the 79th minute a header from Lee following a corner was cleared off the line by Geddes, but four minutes later St Neots got back on level terms as a cross from the left by Hilliard saw Coleman and Broadhurst unable to get the ball away and in the ensuing scramble Davies thumped the ball home from close range.

The visitors tried to respond and on 86 minutes a dangerous dipping free-kick in from the left by Geddes was pushed out by the diving Abbey.

Saxons turn promising start into a hard slog

Birmingham-Solihull 7 Stourbridge Saxons 19

Rugby

AT half-time the Saxons looked as if they'd cruise to a bonus point victory at sticky Portway.

However, poor light, sin-binnings and multiple second half handling errors saw them clinging on to their lead rather than threaten to secure the bonus. As a result they lost ground on leaders Macclesfield & Darlington Mowden Park who both secured five-point victories.

The Saxons worked a catch & drive which was disrupted illegally, but they reloaded and it was second row Nile Dacres who scored as the maul was driven over the tryline.

A Bees close range attack was repelled but at the cost of a yellow card for hooker Dale Garner for not clearing the tackle area.

Against a depleted defence Bees went for the corner again but their lineout ball was disrupted and a soft offside penalty allowed the Saxons to clear their lines.

The Saxons pack drove an attacking scrum towards the Bees' line where flanker Eji Uzoigwe picked up the ball to stroll in unopposed for the score.

Then Stef Shillingford, fended off one tackler, eliminated two more with a dummy then sprinted clear to score, recording the Saxons' second try.

The second half started promisingly with the Saxons in attack.

An opportunity went begging when the Saxons were free kicked for taking too long to set an attacking lineout. White kicked a turnover ball downfield for Hearn, but his hack forward was covered by the sole defender and the Bees defences regrouped.

The Saxons' confidence started to wane much like the light as handling errors mounted up.

A Bees' attack reached the Saxons' 22 where sub Gary Dipple also picked up a yellow card for failing to release in the tackle.

The defences held firm though, and with the clock running down both sides opted to fire kicks over the heads of tiring defences.

With the darkness making open play very difficult the Saxons struggled to string any phases together and the second half ended much as it had begun with a handling error followed by a mad scramble to prevent a Bees breakaway try.

Coach Mike Umaga said: "A good first half performance set us up nicely but we never got going in the second half."

Winger Jamie Hearn takes the ball into the fray supported by his team mate, fullback Tom Jarvis

Khalsa is the victor in seesaw match-up

Sporting Khalsa 3
Cradley Town 2

KHALSA earned a victory over Cradley town in a seesaw last game of 2013.

Khalsa started the brighter of the sides and the first chance of the game fell to them when Liam Hughes failed to convert a one-to-one with the keeper who saved with his legs.

Sporting took the lead in the 10th minute when John Cordy's cross was tapped into the net by Hayden Williams.

Just nine minutes later Cradley levelled.

Then it was Cordy again who retook the lead for Khalsa when he rounded the keeper and shot hard and low into the net.

Not to be outdone on the half hour Cradley equalised with a header.

But Cordy was having none of it and put Khalsa ahead again from three yards out.

The second half started with Causeway pushing forward in numbers in search of another equaliser, but with no real penetration.

Khalsa looked dangerous on the break and both Mark Habbershaw and Liam Hughes had great chances to increase the lead but could not convert the chances.

Lee helps team to the third place

ATHLETE Lee Slater had a great run for second place in the senior men's race at the Worcester county cross country championships, leading Dudley and Stourbridge Harriers to third in the team race.

Paul Waby provided great back up, with an excellent seventh and winning the over-50 age group.

Dave Ratcliffe was chased home by Dave Nation as they finished 18th and 19th, with Jordan Smith 30th and Scott Palmer 43rd closing the team.

Elliot Jones ran well for third in the under-15 boys race as Jay Priantoro was 13th.

In the under-13 boys, Tom Slater also took the bronze medal.

The under-13 girls just missed out on medals as Grace Slater, Niamh Crowe and Chloe Priest finished in fourth place.

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SPORT

Winning hard
Saxons side make tough going of grabbing win
Page 39

Sports Desk 01902 319531 e-mail: chronsport@expressandstar.co.uk

New Year old story as DK are over run

DK 7 Otley RFC 60

WITH the dawning of a new year it was hoped 2014 would bring better fortunes for Dudley Kingswinford.

DK rooted at the bottom of the league welcomed Otley RFC for their second visit to Heathbrook.

Courtesy of some woeful tackling, Otley scored their first try via centre Mackie which was converted by Mark Ireland. Shortly afterwards Ireland's boot again nudged the visitors ahead.

DK's defences, which had begun to leak penalties, allowed the Otley scrum half Stephan Depledge – on his 100th appearance for the club – to score a try, which Ireland converted.

On the half time whistle, Otley were awarded yet another penalty and Ireland converted.

Following the kick-off, the ball was moved wide to allow Paul Hill to run in virtually unopposed and Ireland converted. Another unconverted try in the corner by winger Alexander Beaumont gave the visitors a 32 point lead.

Otley scored converted tries by Hill (his second) No.4 Jonathan Stennard and winger Nazim Karim – to put the game out of sight.

As a consolation Pete Knight crashed over for Gareth Bown to convert for DK. Otley, not to be out done, saw Mark Ireland score his second.

Rout sees off BC Rangers

Shawbury United 4
Black Country Rgrs 0

NINE-MAN Black Country Rangers were convincingly beaten in the only West Midlands League Premier Division fixture to survive the elements.

After the rout, they must have wished they had joined the long list of postponements.

Two goals from Robbie Millington and strikes from Steve Faux and Dave Howarth left Rangers, who had a man sent off in each half, well beaten by full-time.

The game turned when Shawbury striker Stuart Ellis was brought down in the box.

Rangers defender Elliott Sterling was dismissed for the challenge, with Millington converting the penalty.

He scored in open play after the break after robbing a Rangers defender on the edge of the box.

Nuns on the run are victors over Old Hales

Rugby

Old Halesonians 0 Nuneaton 10

THIS was likely to be a defining fixture at home against the league leaders Nuneaton as they held on to a narrow lead for victory.

Hales looked dominant for many periods of the game but too many dropped passes and errors prevented the home team from finishing off.

Early exchanges saw Hales pressing the Nuneaton defence on many occasions but could not cross the try line. The lineout was inconsistent for Hales allowing Nuns to spoil good possession.

The visitors managed to fight back forcing a Hales infringement which they converted for a three point lead. At this stage there was no difference between the sides, Hales gaining more territory.

Hales came back with strong running by backs Andy Robinson, Luke Smith and wing Joe Oxford. This forced an infringement giving a penalty chance to draw level, but Steve Powell missed.

At half time Hales were in confident mood and the first half performance gave indication that the game was there for the taking if they did the basics right.

The second half again showed Hales could win this with driving runs from Pete Fitzgerald, Tom Jordan and Tom Dempsey. The home side continued to camp in the Nuns half but with no reward.

Sloppy passing, dropped balls and unnecessary offloads gave the visitors easy possession. Nuneaton did the basics right from here which was the difference between the sides.

Hales were awarded a penalty left field on the visitors 22, an ideal opportunity for a lineout and driving maul. Steve Powell miss kicked the ball dead in goal gifting possession again to the visitors.

New recruit prop Cliff Tomkinson came on from the bench to help stabilise the scrum and showed his experience in the pack. Nuneaton took their opportunities well, worked their way down the field and dominated a maul to drive over for a converted try.

Injury to centre Carl Robinson disrupted the team as he left the field and Simon Sabel came off the bench as his replacement.

Valiant effort by forwards Jordan, Evans Breese and Fitzgerald could not breach the nuns line.

They remain in fourth in the league but the gap is increasing between the top four. Hales meet Syston at home this Saturday.

LATE SCORE STOPS A GLASSBOYS WIN

Football

Stourbridge 1 Hitchin Town 1

GARY HACKETT'S men paid the price for not turning their large amount of possession into more goals in a dramatic finale where Hitchin grabbed a late equaliser.

The hosts controlled large parts of the match, but with only a one-goal lead for their endeavours there was always the risk the Hertfordshire side might bite back.

Glassboys debutant Netan Sansara quickly made a favourable impression early on. Then Jordan Fitzpatrick sent a 20-yard low shot wide.

Ben Billingham and Ryan Rowe combined to set up Sean Geddes for a shot from just outside the right-hand side of the box which ran wide, but with 13 minutes played the Glassboys forged in-front in fine fashion.

Directed

Brown spread the ball out to Sansara on the left and his precise cross picked out Benbow in the middle who directed a header beyond Bell to open the scoring.

The home side began the second-half strongly and in the 49th minute Brown produced a bustling run down the left before sending a cross-field ball over to Billingham on the right-hand edge of the box and he tried a curling shot that flew off-target.

Five minutes later a goal-kick from Coleman found Benbow on the left and he advanced on the by-line before providing a low centre across the face of the goal for Rowe to blaze over from eight yards as he slid in.

As the Glassboys continued to press, Billingham again went close from another opportunity before Hitchin hit back.

In the 64th minute Matt Lench delivered in a telling deep cross from the right and there was a something of a sandwich at the far post with Andre Francis doing just enough to keep both Simon Martin and Kim Forsythe at bay.

Without a second goal to their credit, Stourbridge were always in for a nervy last few minutes and in the 89th minute they were undone when the ball was touched through for Wharton to accelerate clear through the middle and bear down on goal.

As he tried to round Coleman just outside the penalty area, he was body-checked by the keeper to leave the referee with no choice but to send him off.

Jamie Oliver took over between the sticks, but the sweetly struck low free-kick from Garry Jones gave him no chance as the ball found the far bottom corner of the net to even things up.

The game ended after seven minutes of stoppage time.

Luke Benbow opens the scoring for Stourbridge against Hitchin Town

Phillips is now a Heathen

TALENTED teenager Danny Phillips has joined Cradley Heath for his first full season of National League racing.

Phillips, aged17, joins the reigning champions on a three-point average but impressed club bosses with his scores when riding as a guest for Mildenhall towards the end of last season.

He was wanted by a host of other clubs but pledged his immediate future to the Heathens and joins Paul Starke, Steve Worrall, Tom Perry and Max Clegg as a confirmed starter.

Heathens are also set to hold talks with Nathan Greaves who is wanted back for a second successive season and another new signing will be confirmed next week.

The Heathens are hosting another season ticket sales night on Thursday, January 23 at Cradley Heath Liberal Club.

Club officials will be there to meet supporters.

The club have also confirmed their 2014 season launch party with all the riders will be on Saturday, March 8, at Cradley Heath Liberal Club and tickets will go on sale soon.

Keeper Hennessy says he is sorry

WAYNE HENNESSEY has apologised for refusing to play at Gillingham as Crystal Palace and West Ham emerged as front-runners to sign the £2m-rated goalkeeper.

Boss Kenny Jackett revealed the Wales No.1 had said sorry on Monday morning after asking not to play against the Gills, and he will now be available to face Preston on Saturday.

The Chronicle, a Midland News Association Ltd publication, printed by the company at Ketley, Telford. Thursday, January 9, 2014.

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